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AUGUST 2001 VOL.41 NO.12
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ipc COUNTRY & LEISURE MEDIA

SUBSCRIPTION HOTLINE
01622-778778

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
Annual subscription is for 12 months (13 issues, prices include postage) UK: £35.10
Europe/Eire (inc. VAT): £43 (airmail)
USA: £54 (airmail)
Australia, Far East, Asia, Africa: £58.30 (airmail)
Rest of world: £54 (airmail)
Surface worldwide: £40

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WORLD SOCCER is a member of
ESM EUROPEAN SPORTS MAGAZINES
● A Bola (Portugal) ● Don Balon (Spain) ● Foot (Belgium) ● Kicker (Germany) ● La Gazzetta dello Sport (Italy) ● France Football (France) ● Voetbal International (Holland) ● World Soccer (UK)

August 2001

AS WE get ready for the longest season ever, spare a thought for the players. Remember them? Those rather talented athletes who have been changing hands for lorryloads of cash in recent weeks.

Most leading players will get very little rest between now and the World Cup finals. They'll be expected to turn out for their clubs every weekend and sometimes in midweek as well. Then in June, they'll be forced to represent their country on a global stage in front of an audience of billions for the game's greatest prize, and all the glory that goes with it. And all for £50,000 a week. I don't know how they'll cope.

A quick apology. Last month, we gave the Copa America the benefit of the doubt, setting the scene for a tournament that wanted to be taken seriously by the rest of the world. We recount the farce that followed on page 6. And South America wants the World Cup in 2010...

Gavin Hamilton, Editor (gavin_hamilton@ipcmedia.com)

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Here we go again

ANOTHER summer, another world record. With Real Madrid's £47.2 million capture of Zinedine Zidane from Juventus, football's hyper-inflationary transfer market shows no signs of slowing down.

For the sixth year running, the world record transfer fee has been smashed. Not broken or overtaken. But obliterated, blown sky high, by a club whose president, Florentino Perez, had made it a personal mission to sign the FIFA World Footballer of the Year.

Perez is the construction magnate who came to power at Real a year ago by masterminding the unthinkable – the transfer of Luis Figo from Barcelona for the then earth-shattering £37m. Twelve months on he was determined to get his man by spending another world record sum.

"Why is Zidane leaving Juventus? The answer is very simple," said Juve general manager Luciano Moggi. "Firstly, because he has expressed his desire to leave, and secondly, because Florentino Perez was absolutely determined to take him to Madrid."

Moggi, responsible for Juve's transfer market dealings, had no answer to Perez's persistence, complaining: "Perez is always trying to force situations. When he was trying to sign Luis Figo, his behaviour was even worse."

Zidane's move to Real Madrid had been a common theme in the Spanish press for months before the deal was finally completed. His Spanish wife's desire to raise their children in her home country has been well documented. The Frenchman also had nothing to show for his last three seasons in Turin.

Zidane's agent, Alain Miglaccio, raised the stakes on June 22, when he told Madrid-based daily *Marca*: "I cannot understand Juventus's interest in keeping Zidane if he does not want to stay. The decision has already been taken to leave and I can't understand why they will not accept it."

The story took a decisive turn in the last week of June, when Moggi responded to mounting speculation in the Spanish media, led by *Marca*, that Real were poised to secure Zidane's signature. "Whatever is said in Spain doesn't affect us in the slightest," said Moggi. "The agents and the radio stations are trying to bring him to Spain but he is not going."

Yet a few days later, Moggi effectively conceded defeat when he said: "Zidane is worth £70m to us, so when we're offered that much we can start to talk. I've read that Real will give us £35m for Zidane, but they can double that offer if they are serious."

By now, two things had happened. Zidane had left for a family holiday in Tahiti, having told Juventus that he wanted to move to Madrid. Secondly, Juventus had secured the signings of Lilian Thuram and Gianluigi Buffon from Parma and were preparing a bid for Lazio's Pavel Nedved. Juve, a cautious club in the transfer market by Italian standards, had, in effect, already spent the money they expected to receive from Zidane's sale.

'Madrid president Perez had made it a personal mission to sign the FIFA Footballer of the Year'

On July 3, Perez flew to Italy and met Moggi to thrash out a deal. Three days later Moggi conceded defeat. The only remaining speculation concerned when Zidane would be unveiled as a Real Madrid player.

The Frenchman flew back early from his holiday and on July 9 was presented to the world's media in Madrid.

The deal had repercussions throughout Serie A. Juventus, having also sold Filippo Inzaghi to Milan for £26m, were able to splash out a total of £81m on Thuram, Buffon and Nedved.

The sale of goalkeeper Buffon, in turn, initiated a domino effect, with Parma replacing him with young Frenchman Sebastien Frey from Inter, who signed Francesco Toldo from Fiorentina for £18m.

But while fees are much higher than last year, much of the money changing hands is second-hand.

Juventus have effectively balanced the books with their summer trading. Lazio received more from the sales of

It's been another summer of big deals and telephone-number transfer fees. Gavin Hamilton reports

Nedved and Juan Veron (a UK record £28m to Manchester United) than they splashed out on Gaizka Mendieta and Stefano Fiore.

Parma received more than £90m from their summer sales but spent a smaller figure in bringing in Frey, Hidetoshi Nakata (£20m from Roma) and others for their Champions League campaign. Roma's sale of Nakata paid for their biggest purchase, Antonio Cassano (£18m, from Bari).

But the importance of TV money to Europe's elite clubs cannot be underestimated. In fact, the top tier of clubs has spent considerably more this summer than in previous years.

The biggest spenders in Italy have again been the Milan clubs, with Milan spending in excess of £90m on new players, while recouping only around £30m in sales. Inter's balance of trading, with a host of new arrivals including Toldo and Sergio Conceicao, stands at £20m in the red.

In England, where individual pay-per-view games will be screened for the first time this season, Manchester United have abandoned previous prudent practice, spending £47m in twice breaking the UK record, for Veron and Ruud Van Nistelrooy (£19m, PSV).

In Spain, Barcelona have, in fact, outspent Real Madrid, with almost £60m laid out on Javier Saviola and others. By contrast, French and German clubs have been far more cautious. The biggest purchase for European champions Bayern Munich has been Claudio Pizarro (£5m, Werder Bremen). Borussia Dortmund have been the Bundesliga's biggest spenders, with Jan Koller (£7m, Anderlecht) their biggest signing.

Ironically, while the details of Zidane's record-breaking contract with Real Madrid were being finalised, the extraordinary FIFA Congress in Buenos Aires was approving the details of a new transfer system, the result of negotiations earlier this year between UEFA, FIFA and the European Commission (EC). Real Madrid's purchase of Figo last year is widely thought to have been the catalyst which sparked the EC's interest in the matter, forcing FIFA and UEFA to act.

Under the new proposals, which FIFA hopes will be in place by September and will not apply to existing contracts, players will sign contracts for between one and five years. If they break these deals within a set period – three years for those under 28, two years for over-28s – they face an initial ban of four months. In addition, clubs will be forced to pay compensation to the club that developed the player up to the age of 23.

The big unknown is whether there will be a legal challenge. FIFpro, the body that claims to represent professional players across Europe and which took part in the negotiations with the EC, has yet to rule out the possibility of a challenge to the new rules in the courts.

In response to a question about the Zidane transfer, FIFA president Sepp Blatter revealed that the new system would not affect deals "where all three parties agree". It would seem that, despite the new rules, transfer fees are set to climb even higher.

Ironic, then, that arguably the most significant transfer of the summer, after Zidane, involved no transfer fee.

The saga of Sol Campbell's long, protracted exit from Tottenham was finally brought to an end when he signed a four-year deal with Arsenal.

Spurs were powerless to prevent the defender, a free agent, from joining their most bitter rivals. The move will be recorded in the history books as a free transfer, but it was anything but that for Arsenal. With Campbell's reported signing-on fee of £10m and wages of £50,000 a week, the whole deal is likely to cost Arsenal more than £20m.

Campbell's agent, Sky Andrew, used the interest of Internazionale, Liverpool and Barcelona to raise the stakes in a deal that offers a glimpse of the future: higher fees, shorter contracts, bigger wages and, above all, all power to the players and their agents.

Indeed, the latter are the biggest winners of the summer. The close-season transfer market is now a billion-pound business. According to Perez, agent commission fees in the Zidane transfer totalled £1.9m. That's approximately four per cent of the total fee. If that figure is applied across the whole market, it means agents have pocketed more than £40m from this summer's horse-trading.

Onwards and upwards.

THE SUMMER'S BIGGEST TRANSFERS

SPAIN		
Zinedine Zidane	Juventus to Real Madrid	£47.2m
Javier Saviola	River Plate to Barcelona	£19m
Geovanni	Cruzeiro to Barcelona	£12m
Philippe Christanval	Monaco to Barcelona	£10m
Fabio Rochemback	Internacional to Barcelona	£8m
ENGLAND		
Juan Veron	Lazio to Manchester United	£28m
Ruud Van Nistelrooy	PSV to Manchester United	£19m
Robbie Keane	Inter to Leeds	£11m
Frank Lampard	West Ham to Chelsea	£11m
Giovanni Van Bronckhorst	Rangers to Arsenal	£8.5m
Francis Jeffers	Everton to Arsenal	£8m
Emmanuel Petit	Barcelona to Chelsea	£7.5m
Sol Campbell	Tottenham to Arsenal	free
ITALY		
Gianluigi Buffon	Parma to Juventus	£32m
Rui Costa	Fiorentina to Milan	£28m
Gaizka Mendieta	Valencia to Lazio	£27m
Filippo Inzaghi	Juventus to Milan	£26m
Pavel Nedved	Lazio to Juventus	£25m
Lilian Thuram	Parma to Juventus	£24m
Hidetoshi Nakata	Roma to Parma	£20m
Antonio Cassano	Bari to Roma	£18m
Francesco Toldo	Fiorentina to Inter	£18m
Stefano Fiore	Udinese to Lazio	£17m
FRANCE		
Daniel Van Buyten	Standard Liege to Marseille	£7.7m
Christian	PSG to Bordeaux	£7m
Aloisio	Saint-Etienne to PSG	£6m
Lucas Bernardi	Marseille to Monaco	£6m
GERMANY		
Jan Koller	Anderlecht to Borussia Dortmund	£7m
Claudio Pizarro	Werder Bremen to Bayern Munich	£5m
HOLLAND		
Jan Vennegoor of Hesselink	Twente to PSV	£7m

Copa chaos!

The Copa America may not survive this latest embarrassment, says Brian Homewood

Suspect package...a sniffer dog inspects the Copa America trophy

THE South American Football Confederation's decision on July 1 to reinstate Colombia as hosts for the Copa America but postpone the tournament until 2002 was greeted with a mixture of surprise and relief.

Surprise, because it came only 10 days before the start of the tournament, and because only two days earlier the same CSF had said that the Copa would go ahead in a different country but on the planned dates, July 11 to 29.

And there was relief, because at long last, after months of dallying over whether to stage the tournament in the war-torn Andean nation, the CSF had finally made a decision.

Who knows, if it were held in January and February next year, just ahead of the World Cup, the likes of Argentina and Brazil might even bring their top players to a competition that has increasingly struggled for its place in an ever-more crowded international calendar. The ploy works well for the African Nations Cup.

With everyone seemingly done and dusted until next year, not even those who have become used to the wildest eccentricities of South American football management could have imagined what was to come next.

On July 5, the CSF announced out of the blue that the Copa would in fact begin on the original date – in other words, in six days' time – and in Colombia. It was an utterly contemptible and cynical decision by a group of men who showed, clearly, that they cared nothing for the game and who had even more clearly bowed to the demands of sponsors and Colombian politicians.

Remember that on June 29, just one week earlier, the CSF had effectively declared Colombia – riddled by a 37-year-old civil war, the world's highest kidnapping rate and its infamous drugs trade – too dangerous to host the tournament. Now, with no explanation as to how or why, the CSF was trying to tell the world that Colombia was, in fact, safe.

Two things, it appeared, caused a U-turn. Firstly, the Brazilian company Traffic had sold the television rights for the tournament around the world and stood to lose an estimated £7million if it did not go ahead. One source also said the company could also face lawsuits totalling £100m from disgruntled television networks suddenly left with huge gaps in the programme schedules. Traffic, it appeared, had failed to allow for the possibility of the competition being cancelled, so they persuaded the CSF to backtrack.

Secondly, Colombia president Andres Pastrana was determined to use the staging of the Copa America to improve his country's international standing. The decision to hold the Copa next year was a major blow to him and led to a huge diplomatic offensive by his government.

"To take the Copa away from us is a slap in the face of our dignity and hospitality," Pastrana told a television audience after the CSF's earlier decision.

The CSF had twice before threatened to take the Copa elsewhere after a spate of bomb attacks, murders and massacres in the beleaguered nation. And each decision to reconfirm the Copa in Colombia was followed by an attack even more serious than the previous one.

The 10 days leading up to the final decision, during which the CSF bigwigs were in Buenos Aires for the Libertadores Cup Final, were almost surreal.

On June 25, Colombian Football Federation (FCF) vice-president Hernan Mejia Campuzano was kidnapped by the FARC, the left-wing guerrillas who had promised not to sabotage the Copa. The next day, CSF president Nicolas Leoz, arriving in Buenos Aires, ratified Colombia as hosts. On June 27, he changed his tune and said a decision would be made by the end of the week. That afternoon, the Copa was suspended until Campuzano was released.

> 'We would accept Tahiti if they could make it'
>
> *– unnamed CSF official*

On June 28, the CSF said the Copa would be held elsewhere but on the original dates. Hours later, Campuzano was released. He headed straight for Buenos Aires, where on June 30, Colombia were reinstated as hosts but the Copa was postponed until 2002. Then, on July 5, came the final, ludicrous decision to go ahead as originally planned.

And while the politicians and sponsors bickered and campaigned over the venue, South America's top footballers were deciding which beach to head for.

Amid all the talk about the Copa being "an escape valve for the Colombian people", the directors had carefully omitted to mention that the tournament has become a footballing irrelevance. It has been displaced by South America's World Cup qualifying competition, in which the continent's 10 countries play each other home and away over an 18-month period and in which, logically, the top team can claim to be the region's best.

The latter competition is what football supporters dream of. The stadia are invariably packed, the teams field their top players (Marcelo Bielsa's refusal to pick Gabriel Batistuta apart) and the games are passionate. The top four teams are also rewarded with a place in the World Cup. In short, it's South American football as its very best, infinitely more exciting than watching, say, Sweden meet Slovakia or Norway take on Ukraine. So why, apart from money, hold the Copa America at all?

In deciding to hold the tournament at six days' notice, the CSF's lack of interest and knowledge of the sport was cruelly exposed. Apart from all the obvious questions such as planning, training and nutrition, how were teams supposed to adapt to venues such as Barranquilla, one of the world's muggiest cities, and Bogota, which stands at 2,800 metres above sea level. The CSF don't know and they don't care. In fact, it almost certainly did not even cross their minds.

Argentina replied by pulling out. "It's not our policy to form a team in three days," said Argentinian FA president Julio Grondona pointedly, adding that his players had been sent on holiday following the earlier 'final' decision to postpone the competition. Canada, due to play as guests, also withdrew.

Both teams had been drawn to play in Group C, in Medellin, which was left with Uruguay's reserve side and Bolivia's experimental outfit. They would have met in a single game and both would have qualified. This scenario sent the CSF scuttling to find two replacement teams, handing out invitations willy-nilly around Central America.

"We would accept Tahiti if they could make it," said a leading CSF official, who asked not to be named.

Eventually Costa Rica and Honduras accepted the poisoned chalice. Costa Rica actually provided some of the best football of the opening matches but the rest was exactly what you would expect from a group of teams who were only taking part out of duty.

Tahiti missed nothing by staying at home.

Honest Sepp...Blatter faces FIFA Congress in Buenos Aires

Riding out the storm

Sepp Blatter has come through his toughest test yet, reports Simon Banks

SEPP Blatter emerged from FIFA's extraordinary Congress in Buenos Aires claiming victory over his critics, but it was a victory achieved at considerable cost.

The FIFA president had travelled to Argentina facing a possible vote of no confidence from UEFA over the collapse of FIFA's marketing partner ISL/ISMM and the cancellation of the World Club Championship.

UEFA had sought to capitalise on the fallout from these two events by presenting Blatter with the now infamous '25 questions'. Although most of them related to FIFA's finances and the nature of the governing body's relationship with ISL/ISMM, the UEFA list also contained questions about Blatter's expenses and the alleged existence of a secret Liechtenstein bank account.

In order to placate UEFA, Blatter agreed to sever FIFA's relations with Traffic, the Brazilian marketing company that sells the rights to the World Club Championship and which is part-owned by Ricardo Teixeira, the Brazilian federation leader and son-in-law of ex-FIFA president Joao Havelange.

Blatter also agreed to a complete audit of FIFA's finances, post-ISL, and to drop plans for a new internet strategy to be financed by betting. In addition, the president agreed to "put on ice" plans to move FIFA to a plush new headquarters, perhaps the condition most damaging to his personal pride.

But Blatter won the support of a clear majority of delegates for his explanation of the state of FIFA's finances. In scenes reminiscent of an old Soviet party congress, Blatter received plaudits from delegates from the four corners of the world and a standing ovation after he presented FIFA's financial report. That was hardly surprising, though, since the figures covered the year to December 2000, before the collapse of ISL.

Blatter's performance was full of his trademark showmanship and humour, causing one observer to comment: "If that's a man under pressure, I'd like to see him relaxed." The president reassured delegates that they would not be affected by the ISL bankruptcy. "You are not in any way touched by this difficult situation we went through," he said. "We will go on and fulfil all agreed financial obligations towards you, the 200 or more national associations and federations.

"This is certainly one of the biggest challenges in the history of FIFA but the challenge is there to be met. We can only meet this challenge if we trust each other."

Blatter has consistently said that the financial situation was "a challenge not a crisis". But the absence of a challenger to his position – UEFA president Lennart Johansson has been seriously ill with prostate cancer and did not travel to Buenos Aires – was the most significant factor in helping Blatter survive his toughest test yet.

UEFA's attempts to undermine the FIFA president failed dismally. After facing the executive committee prior to the Congress, Blatter cut short a press conference in order to address the Asian delegates and win over their support, thus leaving UEFA without any allies with whom to mount a challenge.

> 'If Blatter's a man under pressure, I'd like to see him when he's relaxed' – *Congress observer*

Blatter and his supporters were able to outmanoeuvre the European delegates by appealing to non-European interests, a clear majority in the FIFA 'family'.

The FIFA president has made no secret of his support for his organisation's Goal project, which funds football schemes in developing countries with £400,000 grants. In Buenos Aires, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Montserrat and the Faroe Islands were among the latest beneficiaries. A total of 102 countries are targeted to receive aid before 2002, at a cost of more than £40million.

Assuming there is no further deterioration in FIFA's financial situation, Blatter can now look forward with confidence to next year's FIFA Congress in Seoul, where he is expected to seek a second term as president.

Simon Banks is editor of Football Business International

Keir Radnedge

COMMENTARY

'We are now seeing the first elements of the fall-out. FIFA, for example, is having to take out a bridging loan to carry it through to next year's World Cup finals'

What happens when the bubble bursts?

TELEVISION: it's the single issue that dominates football at both domestic and international levels. The game cannot move without TV's permission. It is imprisoned by television contracts, caged by television ratings and fed by television money.

Real Madrid and Manchester United can pay their record transfer fees – for the likes of Zinedine Zidane and Juan Sebastian Veron – because they have the guarantee of the cameras over the next few years. FIFA invests millions to reap billions from the World Cup because it has the guarantee of worldwide TV. The South American confederation, CONMEBOL, runs its player-tiring, invitationally-overblown Copa America every two years because of the 'gift' of TV finance.

Right decision...Grondona

For a couple of years in this column we have asked the same, tedious question which no one wanted to confront: What happens when the bubble bursts?

We are now seeing the first elements of the fall-out. FIFA is having to take out a bridging loan to carry it through the financial unknown leading up to next year's World Cup finals in Japan and South Korea.

The South Americans were humiliatingly forced to revive their cancelled Copa America in Colombia because of the financial weight of the TV deals. So television prefers a fragmented, weakened Copa America to no Copa at all – and football has to go along with that.

Shame on those CONMEBOL directors who did not want to follow the lead of Argentina and its president, Julio Grondona, and pull out. Now Grondona, also FIFA's senior vice-president, by the way, may have had other concerns. But surely he was right to pull Argentina out of the Colombia trip.

I also hope FIFA stands up for probity by supporting Bayern Munich's refusal to release Giovane Elber and new signing Claudio Pizarro for Brazil and Peru respectively. As general manager Uli Hoeness said: "First, FIFA rules require two weeks' notice before a tournament – which was not given. Secondly, we have no security guarantees and we are not willing to gamble with people's lives."

'Pay-per-view will not be the licence to print money many clubs had expected – and on which many were relying'

Fine, so Hoeness – with Bayern approaching the German season-opening League Cup – also had other issues at the back of his mind. But why should Bayern dance to the tune of Latin American TV in such unsatisfactory and insecure circumstances?

Nothing in the UK yet compares with such examples, but the day is not far off, surely. The first straw in the wind was the collapse, last year, of NTL's proposed pay-per-view Premier League deal.

A deal of vastly reduced financial proportions has been secured with a broadcasting consortium. But the signs are clear: pay-per-view is not going to be the licence to print money that many clubs had expected – indeed, upon which many clubs were relying.

As that becomes more clear so some of the predatory TV groups will start to reduce their shareholdings in football clubs. Consequently, the share prices will edge down. That dread word 'recession' will creep into the game's vocabulary.

I write this not as a pessimist but as a realist. Television people, quite correctly, have their own industry's interests at heart; that does not mean, necessarily, that their interests are for the good of football.

The Copa America situation has been bad for football; the collapse of FIFA's marketing partner ISL and its associated TV contracts has been bad for the world game because FIFA has been forced to cancel or freeze a string of projects. The World Club Championship was just the most visible.

At least president Sepp Blatter has preserved the Goal project, which hands out million-dollar grants to development programmes in, largely, the poorer nations. But then Goal is the crown jewel in Blatter's manifesto for the Third World which has proved a winning constituency for both himself and Joao Havelange before him.

Keep Goal running – and paying out – and Blatter will enjoy more ovations such as the one that greeted his handling of FIFA Congress in Buenos Aires recently.

UEFA came out of the congress in a poor light. All the talk of no-confidence proposals fizzled out once new German federation president Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder had made it clear that the DFB would not support any such precipitate action. The rest of the world thought UEFA made a poor case in Buenos Aires and, of course, there is no love lost with the rest of FIFA membership, who outnumber Europe three to one.

So what happens next in the power battle with television?

At world level FIFA is signing over all its World Cup TV marketing rights for 2002 and 2006 to the German Kirch group. This is not as straightforward as it seems because the Swiss courts have yet to rule on whether FIFA can, as Blatter insists, reclaim control of the rights from the bankrupt ISMM/ISL. If it can, then maybe the loss to FIFA from the debacle is 'only' Blatter's stated £30million; if not, then the losses will escalate into many more millions and threaten FIFA's very existence.

The legal argument is this: many ISL creditors believe TV and sponsors should continue to pay scheduled instalments to the company administrator and be treated as company assets; on the other hand, FIFA contends that ISL lost its right to ongoing monies because it is incapable of delivering the terms of the original contracts.

At a European level, UEFA will have to consider shortly whether to renew, from 2003, the Champions League marketing and commercial contract vested in TEAM or whether to find a new partner. Contenders will not be in short supply. Dozens of companies will pursue the prize even if only to try to establish their names and brands among football's top commercial echelon.

TEAM, founded originally – and ironically – by former ISL men, has done a good job. But UEFA may well decide it makes more sense to abandon the 'old-fashioned' marketing company route (as represented by, say, TEAM or Media Partners) and jump 'honestly' into bed with a TV company such as, say, Kirch or Spain's ambitious, expansionist, Telefonica.

The reality of the new UK domestic deal – in which ITV replaces BBC as free-to-air purveyor of Premier League football – will be scrutinised with intense interest. But of significant interest, in the background, is the likelihood shortly of ITV programmes being placed on the Sky Digital network.

Right now, most bizarrely to outsiders, the ITV digital network can beam out Sky sports events. That may soon end. In due time, the digital competition will be won and lost and rights competitors will drop out of the market. Then the price of English domestic football may stand still.

FIFA and ISL; UEFA and TEAM; England's Premiership and the digital revolution – more straws in the wind.

● THE FIFA Congress in Buenos Aires agreed to the principle of World Cup competition with a start in Africa in 2010. But will the African confederation be up to the challenge?

If Africa had sorted out a single African candidacy for 2006 – rather than allowing both South Africa and Morocco to compete – the saving grace of rotation would not be needed.

● LENNART JOHANSSON, Swedish president of UEFA, says he is recovering from treatment for prostate cancer and that, at 71, is considering standing for a further four years as UEFA president.

Why? Is it because he fears the bandwagon of Sepp Blatter's counsellor, Michel Platini? Is it because he sees no obvious successor at his shoulder? Or does he hope to stay on just long enough to see off Blatter as FIFA president next year?

After Wembley, it's goodbye to the Wankdorf

THE Wankdorf stadium has joined Wembley on the list of great old stadia of yesteryear.

Just as Wembley was shut down pending a decision on redevelopment last autumn, so the gates to the Wankdorf in Berne have been closed and bolted for the last time. Almost simultaneously, work began in Paris on dismantling the old Stade Colombes – bringing to three the number of World Cup Final venues brought under the demolition hammer.

Colombes hosted the 1938 World Cup Final, in which Italy beat Hungary 4-2, the same score when England defeated Germany after extra time at Wembley in 1966. As for the Wankdorf, that witnessed the greatest surprise in World Cup Final history when West Germany beat Hungary 3-2 in 1954.

Appropriately West German heroes Fritz Eckel and Ottmar Walter were among the guests of honour for the last match in the Wankdorf, a 'simple' Swiss League game in which promoted Young Boys drew 1-1 with Lugano.

End of an era... the Wankdorf stadium

Unlike Wembley, the future of a redeveloped Wankdorf has already been decided. Lengthy negotiations between national and local governments produced a proposal – now agreed – to rebuild the stadium at a cost of £150million.

The new all-seater venue will be ready in the summer of 2004.

NOTES AND QUOTES

Big spender...Adriano Galliani

"In the end, the heart got the better of the head."
Milan vice-president Adriano Galliani after paying Fiorentina £28 million for Portuguese playmaker Rui Costa.

"I want people to talk less at Benfica. The tradition here is for people to talk a lot and do very little."
Benfica president Manuel Vilarinho believes silence is golden.

"The Brazilian Football Confederation loses with the first team, the reserve team, the third team and the Under-20 team. Losing is our business."
Columnist Juca Kfouri following the senior Brazil side's fourth straight defeat, to Mexico in the Copa America

FINANCIAL FOOTBALL

Following UEFA's lead

Oliver Butler on the implications in Asia of cancelling the World Club Championship

No go...top Asian sides such as Suwon Bluewings and Jubilo Iwata are missing out on the global exposure offered by the World Club Championship

THE postponement of this summer's World Club Championship in Spain due to FIFA's financial problems has inevitably placed a question mark over the future of the controversial tournament, dubbed 'Blatter's baby' because it was the brainchild of the FIFA president.

However, a permanent end to the tournament would have repercussions for club football around the world. For, whatever the political reasons behind its establishment – the World Club Championship stretches FIFA's control over world football from a national team level to club football level – the tournament has helped the development of the club game worldwide.

For the representative clubs of Asia, Africa and Oceania, it has provided the perfect stage to demonstrate before a global audience the development of the club game in their regions. It also started a 'trickle down' effect on the quality of the regional club championships that effectively became the qualifiers for the finals tournament.

The Asian confederation (AFC) had already given a boost to its two regional club competitions by announcing that the winners of the Asian Supercup – played between the holders of the Club Championship and the Cup-winners Cup – would qualify for the World Club finals. Then, in the spring, the AFC went a step further by stating its plans to merge its club tournaments to create a Champions League.

'A unified Asian club tournament would make it easier to sell the event to TV'

In the past, both competitions have been dogged by problems. The great distances between member nations, the large disparity in playing standards between different leagues, and the lack of club revenues to pay for travel or the hosting of games have led to a number of ties being cancelled in the opening rounds.

The AFC has tried to counter this by dividing part of the competitions into East and West Asian zones and by playing entire stages at just one location. However, this has clashed with domestic fixture lists and on more than one occasion, teams from the J.League, arguably the strongest league in Asia, have fielded second-string teams.

Another obstacle facing the AFC is the split between the rich Arab member nations in the West and the economic powerhouses in the East. But if the confederation can unite these two sections to support a unified competition, it will be able to concentrate more funds towards facilitating participation from poorer clubs.

A unified competition would also make it easier for the AFC's marketing partner to sell the competition to TV stations and so find sponsors to provide funding.

"The Asian Super League will help us to build a profile of Asian talent that is recognised in Asia and outside at a club level, which is the bread and butter of football, not just at a national team level," explains Nick Mould of AFC Marketing. "Many Asians can name the Juventus team, but not a top Asian club like Al Hilal."

The AFC, along with other confederations, has looked with envy at the marketing success of the UEFA Champions League. The European event has established itself as a major part of the football calendar – it dominates TV schedules on midweek evenings – through the rigorous strategy of UEFA's marketing agency, TEAM.

High levels of sponsorship and lucrative TV deals mean the UEFA tournament has also generated income levels that easily outstrip any other club competition in the world and come close to the level of the World Cup.

Of course, such revenues are impossible in the short run for AFC Marketing, but, with over a quarter of the world's population in its remit, a successful tournament could attract a significant TV audience.

The catch as always is money. A tournament needs to be established in order to attract the type of sponsors willing to pay top-dollar rates. But, firstly the AFC needs to guarantee that no club will discredit the tournament by withdrawing midway through or by fielding a weakened team. The confederation will be aided in this by the establishment of the international calendar from 2002, which will prevent clashes with domestic fixtures. But it must also dangle a few financial carrots in front of clubs in order to safeguard their participation.

The 2002 World Cup, Asia's first, will help by introducing football sponsors to the continent at an unprecedented level. The hope is, of course, that some of these companies stay involved in sponsoring the Asian game at different levels. It might also alert new firms to marketing opportunities in the area.

The AFC would also be helped by the return of the World Club Championship to provide a further incentive to participating teams. But, unfortunately for Asia, that remains a matter for discussion.

Oliver Butler writes for Soccer Investor *(www.soccerinvestor.com)*

Pele
OPINION

'No one in Brazil will underestimate Japan'

WHEN Japan and South Korea were originally awarded the World Cup it was not the most popular decision in the rest of the world. I heard a lot of complaints that neither country had ever made any impression in the finals. Indeed, at that time, Japan had never even reached the finals.

Of course, Japan then qualified for the finals in France in 1998. Now I hope people will start to think again about the strength of their football.

The progress that has been made in the past seven or eight years is incredible. I never would have believed that Japan could come so far so fast. But then they have applied the same effort to soccer as their big companies applied to their industrial growth.

No one in Brazil will underestimate Japan. If it had not been for a good save from Dida, our goalkeeper, then Japan could have beaten Brazil in the Confederations Cup. His stop from Hidetoshi Nakata was important too.

Nakata is such an intelligent, all-round player. When I saw him in 1998 I thought he was a different class from the rest of his team-mates. Now that he has been playing most of the time in Europe, I believe he is, potentially, a world-class player. He works hard for the team and he has a good technique. Perhaps he needs a little more confidence when it comes to shooting but he is only 25. He has time to work on that.

This is important not only for him but for his team. Finishing was a weakness of Japan at the last World Cup and I saw it again in the Confederations Cup. They combine well in midfield, they build attacks very carefully and with a lot of pace. But they are not so good at finishing off attacks in the penalty area.

Shinji Ono is a new young player who interests me. Japan took him to France 98 for the experience. Now he has signed for Feyenoord in Holland and his one season in Europe before the World Cup could make all the difference.

Japan are certainly ahead of South Korea. You know, in the centre of the capital, Seoul, there is a big clock that counts down the days to the World Cup finals. That must be a worry for Guus Hiddink, the Koreans' national team coach, every time he drives past.

Hiddink is an experienced coach, he has worked with big clubs in Europe and led Holland to the semi-finals of the World Cup in France three years ago. But he has not been in the Korean job for long and so he must work extra hard to study his players, then put over his ideas.

But Hiddink can also count his blessings. He is fortunate that all his players are with clubs in Korea and Japan. It is not like the national coaches of South American or African countries who have to bring back their players from Europe every time they have an important match. So, that is an advantage for the Dutchman. Even the players from clubs in Japan can reach Korea quickly. They do not face long transatlantic flights like the Brazilians and Argentinians.

One thing I like about the Korean players is that they learn quickly. In the Confederations Cup they improved rapidly from one game to another – from the 5-0 beating by France to the 2-1 win over Mexico and then the 1-0 win against Australia. Their passing improved, their concentration improved and even their shooting improved.

> 'Now that Nakata has been playing most of the time in Europe, I believe he is, potentially, a world-class player'

But I am not sure about their use of Hong Myung-bo. He is their captain and most experienced international. He has also been playing in World Cup finals tournaments for something like a decade. But whether he is the right man to command their defence I am not certain. I thought the other Korean players sometimes looked to him too much. It was as if they expected him to sort out all their defensive problems single-handed.

Maybe they need to experiment with some different defensive systems. That might also give other players the opportunity to come through, to exert their own personalities.

Hwang Sun-hong headed a good goal against Mexico in the Confederations Cup; I don't think the Mexicans were expecting the Koreans to be as combative in the air as they were. Certainly I was surprised. Maybe this can be Hiddink's secret weapon.

Pele, MasterCard's football ambassador, was talking to Keir Radnedge

NOTES AND QUOTES

"Diego really did a lot of good for world football and deserves and will always deserve the respect of FIFA and all fans."
FIFA president Sepp Blatter after an unexpected reconciliation with bete noire Diego Maradona.

"Argentina's decision has shown they are not our brothers. It's a cowardly act."
Brazil coach Luiz Felipe Scolari hits out after Argentina withdraw from the rescheduled Copa America.

Short stay?...Sven Goran Eriksson

"I don't think I'll stay for five years."
England boss Sven Goran Eriksson reveals a surprising lack of belief in his staying power.

"I had a good vibe about Sparta and I acted on it. They are a historic club, one which many people in Holland have a lot of sympathy for."
Frank Rijkaard on his shock appointment as coach of habitual Dutch under-achievers, Sparta Rotterdam.

Brian Glanville on the whereabouts of one of the game's most talented but long-forgotten coaches

Credit to Carver!

JESSE CARVER is 90 and living in Bournemouth. The discovery delighted and fascinated me. For so many years now I'd wondered what had happened to this gifted and enigmatic figure, beyond doubt one of the outstanding coaches since the war, a salient figure in Italian football who could and should surely have become as prominent and influential in his native England.

My mind goes back especially to a meeting in the foyer of the Hotel Quirinale in Rome early in 1955, the year in which I'd last seen Carver, then manager of Roma. At the time, I was a 23-year-old, working largely for the *Corriere Dello Sport*, and on the day in question he told me he was to meet the FA secretary, Sir Stanley Rous. Why didn't I come along? It might do me some good.

Rous stood there, massive and imposing, greeting Carver. I asked him if he'd had a good journey. "Yes, yes, yes," he said brusquely. "Who are you?" and showed scant interest when I told him. Probably just as well, since in my perceived insignificance, I was no barrier to what followed – the offer to Carver of the managership of England's team. "It's about time we brought Walter into the office," said Rous. Walter, of course, being Walter Winterbottom, first England manager, whose reign would last, remarkably, from 1946 to 1962.

I cannot remember what Carver said to me about it afterwards, but he didn't take the bait. All the more mysterious was that, at the end of the season, with Roma in an honourable third place in Serie A, he should agree to manage Coventry City, then in the Third Division (South), and take George Raynor with him from rivals Lazio as his assistant. It seemed a classical case of over-egging the pudding and it was hardly surprising that it didn't last.

'He turned down the England job to stay with Roma...then next season turned up at Third Division Coventry City'

European pioneer...Jesse Carver

Carver struck gold in his very first Italian season, winning the *scudetto* with Juventus in 1950. A year later, he was sacked, the victim of journalistic betrayal. In an interview with the *Gazzetta Dello Sport*, he criticised the club's directors, assuming it was off the record. Fatal. The criticisms appeared in print, and Carver was out. This no doubt explained why his contract when at Roma forbade him to give interviews.

As a player, Carver was a centre-half with Blackburn Rovers, Newcastle United, where he came close to an England cap, and Bury. During the war he served in the police force. After it, he became assistant trainer at Huddersfield Town, but eagerly took the chance to manage the Xerces club of Rotterdam, then a leading Dutch team.

Carver had great success with Xerces, so much so that he was approached to take over the Dutch national team, his club reluctantly agreeing. He did well there, too, but left without much warning. This would become something of a pattern until at last Carver ran out even of Italian clubs; but how many of them there would be!

It was when he was managing Torino, then still devastated by the Superga air crash of 1949, which had wiped out a whole team, that I first met Carver, in a small hotel in Florence. He did what he could for Torino, then it was off to Rome. And from Rome to Coventry.

It was not long, however, before the Englishman was back in Italy. Arriving at Ciampino Airport in Rome, the Carvers were met by Count Vaselli, by then the president of Lazio, due in time to go bust as a builder. He presented Mrs Carver (still vigorously alive at 87!) with a bouquet of roses. But instead of signing for Lazio, Jesse flew north to Milan and joined Inter. "The thorns," *Il Calcio Illustrato* wryly captioned its photo of the presentation, "were for Lazio."

But Lazio forgave and forgot. Back to Rome Carver would eventually come, to take charge of them, moving on in time to run both Genoa and Sampdoria. There was also, in his Italian saga, a spell with the lesser Marzotto club, owned by the wealthy Count Marzotto.

Eventually, Carver returned to England and became, very briefly, a coach at Tottenham Hotspur. Then, tantalisingly, he vanished off football's radar screen.

The word was that he retired to Bournemouth and it was there in fact that I at last traced him, although there had been a spell when the Carvers lived in Newquay.

How sad it was to hear that this sturdy, rubicund and vigorous man, as one had known him, is now frail and infirm. Not the man who would keep ultra healthy in the dressing-rooms of the old Stadio Torino, tended by a masseur, and even a manicurist who had once served Mussolini.

What would have happened, I wonder, if he had accepted Rous's offer? Perhaps he reflected that, at the time, the manager was subordinated to the whims of a panel of selectors, club directors. He had to do what he could with whatever team the butchers, bakers and candlestick-makers handed him, after their wranglings. Carver would hardly have stood for that. He had left jobs for less. I do wish that, at least, he had gone on working in England, but he was always his own, slightly secretive, man.

I wish him well.

Paul Gardner

GLOBAL VIEW

Who will save us from Houllier and the one-nil wonders?

AS I DISLIKE and don't really understand statistics, I'll get them out of the way quickly.

At France 98, 36 of the 64 games (that's 56 per cent) featured three or fewer goals. The two commonest scorelines were 1-0 and 2-1, with 12 instances each. Only seven games (11 per cent) soared to five or more goals. One final, official, stat: the average was 2.67 goals per game.

My question is this: is that enough scoring? And my answer is no, it is not. This anaemic diet of one goal every half hour needs a boost, some sort of strengthening supplement, to maybe double it. An average of five goals per game, with 3-2 the most frequent scoreline, would be about right.

Just how do I propose to bring that about? I don't really know – for the moment, my intention is to request a serious discussion of the matter.

Football in 2001, it seems to me, is deeply flawed. It is badly out of balance. The balance being, of course, that between attack and defence. Despite the various pro-attack changes made in the rules over the past decade, it must be clear that defenders still have the game by the scruff of the neck.

Those low scorelines tell you how much easier it is to defend than to attack. To make that point is to invite the usual half-witted reply: you want to cheapen the game, you'll make it too easy to score goals.

People who take that line rarely stop to consider that if there is a point at which goal-scoring becomes too easy, there must also be a point at which it becomes too difficult.

The essential aim of football is to score goals. But when it becomes so much easier to *prevent* goals from being scored is it any wonder a sea-change occurs and defensive thinking takes over?

With the sport in its present low-scoring mode, one goal – just *one* goal – can decide a game (which can often mean deciding a whole season, to say nothing of the coach's job). One goal – which can mean one mistake, one accidental slip, one moment of bad luck.

It can also mean *one* decision by the referee – a fact that is at the heart of the persistent criticism of refereeing standards and surely makes referees the logical targets for gamblers and suchlike who want to fix games.

From that 'one goal' mentality grows an ugly mesh of negative, defensive schemes that turn the game upside down and completely reverse the notion that goal-scoring is the priority.

Pele is fond of saying that, in his playing days, all the top countries had several world-class attacking players. Now...and he starts to count on his fingers and gets to four.

That is where defensive dominance has taken us. The astonishing thing, to me, is that this drying up of goalscoring seems to be acceptable to far too many people. Little has been done to reverse the trend. Fatalism seems to rule, an attitude that this is the way things are and nothing can be done about it.

FIFA's rule changes, better late than never, are well-intentioned but it is clear there is an inertia within the game that strongly resists them. It is easy to blame the referees for this, but the sport gets the referees it deserves.

Most people I speak to are strongly in favour of the offside rule change (in line is onside). Yet that change – introduced over 10 years ago! – is undermined by bad calls (favouring the defence, of course) in virtually every game, at every level, that one sees. The so-called ban on the tackle from behind is a joke – the foul is as prevalent and as destructive as ever.

Rule changes, evidently, are not the answer. Or, at least, they will not be until they act in a way that destroys that 'one-goal' mentality.

The prize culprit here is Gerard Houllier, who took his expensive star-studded Liverpool team to Camp Nou and was too scared to play anything that even looked like football. Underlying that craven fiasco, of course, was the reasonable certainty that Liverpool, by refusing to come out of their bunker, could succeed in stopping Barcelona from scoring.

They did, and the 0-0 draw so obtained will live in soccer infamy. Houllier believes that by making a mockery of the sport he did something clever. Far too many people seem to agree with him.

But compare that dismal game with the Liverpool-Alaves UEFA Cup Final – hailed widely as one of the great European Finals of all time. Why? Could it be that all those goals – nine of them – had something to do with the excitement, the constant changes in momentum, the pulsating ebb and flow of hope and despair?

You bet they did. But the naysayers have already been heard braying that this wasn't soccer, where were the defences, what a travesty and so on.

They must be ignored. More games like that and fewer like the disgraceful Camp Nou farce are what is required. The sport has to banish the deeply – and justifiably – held conviction that one goal will be enough.

NOTES AND QUOTES

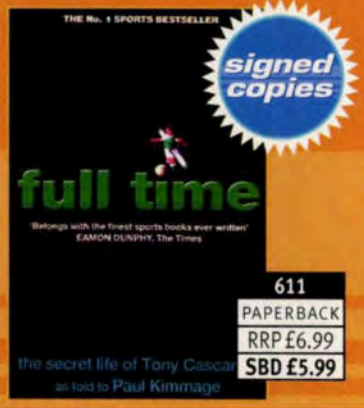
Optimistic...Lippi

"Without Zidane, Juve will not have the same fantasy, but we'll play quicker and be more compact."
Juventus coach Marcello Lippi looks on the bright side after the world's top player left the Turin club for Real Madrid.

"To get into the First Division and then trade away your right to it is something I can't accept."
Disillusioned defender Lucian Ciocan after his Romanian side, Baia Mare, won promotion and then promptly sold their place in the top flight to Bacau, who had just been relegated. The price? £500,000.

"I have been forced to start legal action to restore my good name."
Nigerian forward Jonathan Akpoborie sues Unicef and the charity Terre des Hommes after they alleged that he had shipped child slaves.

"Rivaldo is not for sale. Must I say it in Chinese?"
Barcelona president Joan Gaspart.



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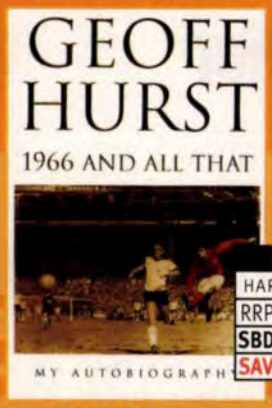

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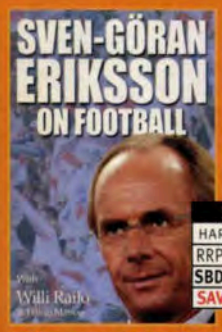

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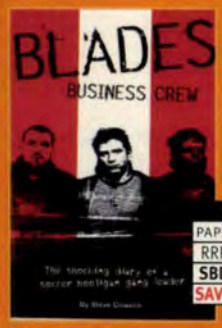

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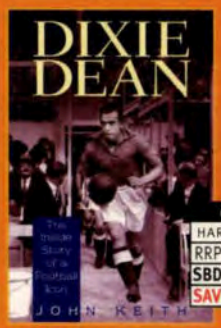

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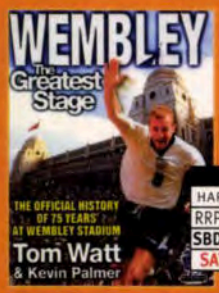

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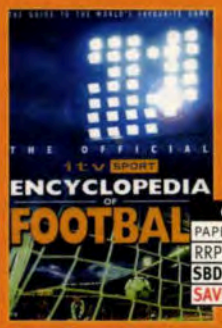

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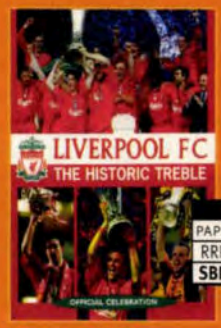

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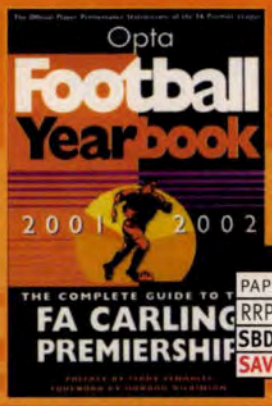

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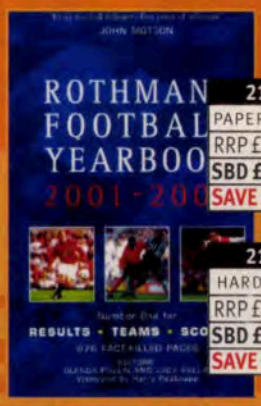

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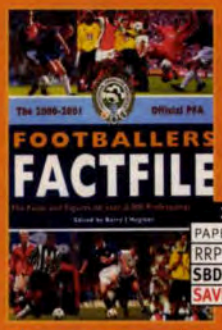

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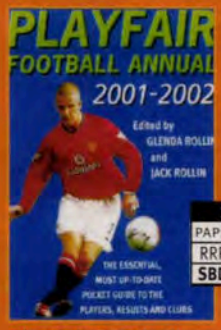

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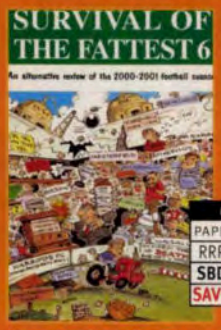

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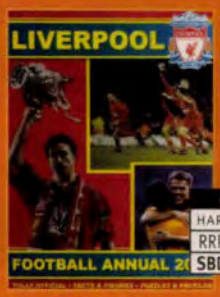

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Argentina all the way

Top-flight experience was the key to the hosts' emphatic victory, writes Eric Weil

That'll do...Maximiliano Rodriguez rounds off the scoring in the Final against Ghana

ARGENTINA won the World Youth Cup on home soil and for the third time in the last four editions simply because of their greater experience and professionalism.

In fact, they virtually walked through the Under-20s tournament, winning all seven matches and only one of them by a single-goal margin – the 2-1 defeat of China in the second round.

The reason for the Argentinians' superiority in this age group is clear. As the country continues to export its best players to top European sides, the domestic top-flight teams are getting younger and younger as new blood is drafted in to fill the gaps. As a consequence, the regular starters at the World Youth Cup, and even the reserves, have practically all had plenty of First Division experience.

By every measure, Argentina were by far and away the best side in the competition. They scored no fewer than 27 goals in total, an average of 3.86 per game, whereas the average tournament game as a whole produced fewer than three goals.

Then there was the quality of the football. The Argentinians captured the imagination of the crowds right from the outset with their displays of delightful soccer. Over the page, we highlight some of the side's best players, but the team as a whole won a host of admirers, including some distinguished names. "I haven't seen a team so rich in technique and teamwork for a very long time" – Franz Beckenbauer; "This is an excellent, overpowering team, which shows audacity and initiative" – Aime Jacquet; "Argentina has order, discipline and an individual skill which makes the difference. They play like grown-up, experienced professionals" – Louis Van Gaal.

Before the tournament began, there was a natural fear that such a star-studded side would fail to gel, as happened when the Argentinian Under-23 team failed to qualify for last year's Olympic Games.

But one of this side's many strong points was teamwork, and when combined with their experience and individual skill, it is little wonder that they proved impossible to beat.

Much credit must also go to coach Jose Pekerman, who some time ago turned down the offer to become boss of Argentina's senior national team in order to stay with the youngsters. He is now the only coach ever to win three World Youth Cups.

Brazil had started the tournament as favourites, having won the South American Under-20 Championship earlier in the year, which served as a qualifier for the World Youth Cup.

The Brazilians had few problems at the group stage, winning all three matches comfortably while showing dribbling and short-passing skills that were reminiscent of the country's former 'jogo bonito'. But after cruising past Australia in the second round, they met their match against Ghana, losing 2-1 after a close-fought game.

The Africans went on to the Final, beating Egypt 2-0 to set up the showdown with Argentina.

This proved to be an entertaining finale to what had been a very enjoyable tournament, but there was never any doubt about the outcome after Argentina went 2-0 ahead, through Diego Colotto and Javier Saviola, within 14 minutes. Maximiliano Rodriguez rounded off the scoring in the 73rd minute to secure the trophy for the South Americans.

Nevertheless, Ghana coach Emmanuel Afranie was very satisfied with his team's performance, and while conceding that Argentina were deserved champions, he stated that if he could keep his side together, they would be strong candidates for the 2006 World Cup.

In fact it was China who gave Argentina their toughest game, despite

having only scraped into the second round as one of the best four third-placed teams from the six groups.

There is no arguing that China could soon be a force in soccer, with their massive potential player pool now supported by the better organisation introduced by a raft of foreign coaches. However, the Under-20s paid for their rather naive approach by conceding a late goal to Argentina after Qu Bo had equalised a few minutes into the second half.

As for the European sides, they were rather eclipsed in the knockout stages, with none getting further than the last eight. Holland, who had lost to eventual Group E winners Costa Rica in their first game, went out 2-1 to Egypt, who finally finished third.

The workmanlike Czechs lost to Paraguay having knocked out Costa Rica in the second round, while France were unlucky to come up against a Saviola-inspired Argentina.

There were some more general points arising from the tournament. Encouragingly, there was no sign of any racism, a subject that was discussed at length by the FIFA Congress held in Buenos Aires during the competition. In fact, the Ghana team were extremely popular with local fans – until the Final, of course.

The Ethiopians, meanwhile, were the most popular team in Group E, played in Salta, even though they finished bottom with no points.

Indeed, the players liked it so much that three of them absconded following a farewell party and were still missing when the rest of the squad left for home. The trio were reportedly being sheltered by a Salta family, had applied for residence and were training with a local club, although their eventual aim was to get to the United States.

As at past World Youth Cups, there were some suspicions over the age of certain players. However, FIFA general secretary Michel Zen-Ruffinen stated that there is nothing more that FIFA can do other than check the documentation issued by the governments of the respective teams and make it clear to each national federation that it is their responsibility to check that players are not above the age limit.

In terms of organisation, the tournament's drawing power was badly under-estimated. Organisers mistakenly elected to stage the Buenos Aires games at Velez Sarsfield's 40,000-capacity stadium rather than at River Plate's ground, which holds 75,000. This error was compounded by the decision to hand out 25,000 free tickets in an effort to ensure capacity crowds.

After the group stage, tickets were in such demand that several fights broke out among fans gathering at selling points. On one day, this led to sales being suspended for 24 hours. Needless to say, touts had a field day.

Equaliser...Qu Bo scored for China to help give Argentina their toughest match

results

Group A

In Buenos Aires

June 17.....Argentina-Finland.....2-0
June 17.....Egypt-Jamaica.....0-0
June 20.....Jamaica-Finland.....0-1
June 20.....Egypt-Argentina.....1-7
June 23.....Argentina-Jamaica.....5-1
June 23.....Finland-Egypt.....1-2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Argentina	3	3	0	0	14	2	9
Egypt	3	1	1	1	3	8	4
Finland	3	1	0	2	2	4	3
Jamaica	3	0	1	2	1	6	1

Argentina and Egypt qualified

Group B

In Cordoba

June 17.....Brazil-Germany.....2-0
June 17.....Iraq-Canada.....3-0
June 20.....Canada-Germany.....0-4
June 20.....Iraq-Brazil.....1-6
June 23.....Brazil-Canada.....2-0
June 23.....Germany-Iraq.....3-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brazil	3	3	0	0	10	1	9
Germany	3	2	0	1	7	3	6
Iraq	3	1	0	2	5	9	3
Canada	3	0	0	3	0	9	0

Brazil and Germany qualified

Group C

In Mendoza

June 17.....United States-China.....0-1
June 17.....Chile-Ukraine.....2-4
June 20.....Ukraine-China.....0-0
June 20.....Chile-United States.....1-4
June 23.....United States-Ukraine.....1-1
June 23.....China-Chile.....0-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ukraine	3	1	2	0	5	3	5
United States	3	1	1	1	5	3	4
China	3	1	1	1	1	1	4
Chile	3	1	0	2	4	8	3

Ukraine, United States and China qualified

Group D

In Rosario

June 18.....Angola-Czech Republic.....0-0
June 18.....Japan-Australia.....0-2
June 21.....Australia-Czech Republic.....0-3
June 21.....Japan-Angola.....1-2
June 24.....Angola-Australia.....1-1
June 24.....Czech Republic-Japan.....0-3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Angola	3	1	2	0	3	2	5
Czech Republic	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Australia	3	1	1	1	3	4	4
Japan	3	1	0	2	4	4	3

Angola, Czech Republic and Australia qualified

Group E

In Salta

June 18.....Ecuador-Ethiopia.....2-1
June 18.....Holland-Costa Rica.....1-3
June 21.....Costa Rica-Ethiopia.....3-1
June 21.....Holland-Ecuador.....1-1
June 24.....Ecuador-Costa Rica.....0-1
June 24.....Ethiopia-Holland.....2-3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Costa Rica	3	3	0	0	7	2	9
Ecuador	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Holland	3	1	1	1	5	6	4
Ethiopia	3	0	0	3	4	8	0

Costa Rica, Ecuador and Holland qualified

Group F

In Mar del Plata

June 18.....Ghana-Paraguay.....2-1
June 18.....Iran-France.....0-5
June 21.....France-Paraguay.....2-2
June 21.....Iran-Ghana.....0-1
June 24.....Ghana-France.....0-0
June 24.....Paraguay-Iran.....2-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ghana	3	2	1	0	3	1	7
France	3	1	2	0	7	2	5
Paraguay	3	1	1	1	5	4	4
Iran	3	0	0	3	0	8	0

Ghana, France and Paraguay qualified

Second round

June 27.....United States-Egypt (Buenos Aires) .0-2
June 27.....Argentina-China (Buenos Aires) 2-1
June 27.....France-Germany (Cordoba).....3-2
June 27.....Brazil-Australia (Cordoba).....4-0
June 28.....Ukraine-Paraguay (Mendoza).....1-2
June 28.....Angola-Holland (Rosario).....0-2
June 28.....Costa Rica-Czech Rep (Salta).....1-2
June 28.....Ghana-Ecuador (Mar del Plata).....1-0

Quarter-finals

July 1.....Argentina-France (Buenos Aires) ...3-1
July 1.....Ghana-Brazil (Cordoba)..... (aet) 2-1
July 1.....Czech Rep-Paraguay (Mendoza) 0-1
July 1.....Holland-Egypt (Rosario).....1-2

Semi-finals

July 4.....Egypt-Ghana (Cordoba).....0-2
July 4.....Argentina-Paraguay (Buenos Aires)...5-0

Third-place play-off

July 8.....Paraguay-Egypt (Buenos Aires).....0-1

FINAL

July 8 - Buenos Aires

Argentina 3 (Colotto 6, Saviola 14, Rodriguez 73)
Ghana 0

HT: 2-0. **Att:** 32,000. **Ref:** Mejuto Gonzalez (Spa)

Argentina: Caballero - Burdisso, Cetto, Colotto - Ponzio, Medina (Seltzer 90), Romagnoli (Rosales 70), Arca, D'Alessandro (Herrera 80) - Saviola, Rodriguez.

Ghana: Banahene - Muntari, Villars, Mensah, Pappoe - Ibrahim, Essien, Boateng, Pantsil - Pimpong (Osei 75), Duah (Thompson 68)

Full results & squads in World Service, starting page 31

Home stars shine brightest

Most Valuable Player...Javier Saviola

ARGENTINA'S 19-year-old forward Javier Saviola – who has just moved to Barcelona for some £19million – was voted the tournament's Most Valuable Player and broke the all-time World Youth Cup scoring record with 11 goals.

He has been a first-team regular for River Plate for three years, scoring more than 50 League goals, and is already the complete striker – offering great pace, a good heading ability and superb finishing from inside the box.

Bearing all this in mind, it might be surprising to say that he was outshone in several games by midfielder Andres D'Alessandro, his team-mate at River.

In contrast to Saviola, D'Alessandro has had only a few first-team outings at club level, and he travelled to this tournament expecting to be a reserve. However, the left-footer got his chance in the starting XI because of injuries, and, as playmaker, ended up involved in more of the play than Saviola.

D'Alessandro produced some wonderful, unexpected things for one so young, quickly became the local fans' favourite, and, without doubt, was the outstanding player of the Final.

Aston Villa gave him a trial not so long ago, but they have missed their chance to buy him on the cheap. His price-tag will have rocketed.

Then there was speedy central defender Fabricio Coloccini, a regular this year for opening championship winners San Lorenzo and emerging as the best central defender in the entire top division.

Last year, Coloccini was in line to replace Roma-bound Walter Samuel at Boca Juniors but then moved to Milan under a law that gives parents priority over clubs when it comes to determining the future of players under 18. He then moved on loan to San Lorenzo, who have been reluctant to let him go.

Coloccini picked up a second yellow card in Argentina's 5-0 semi-final thrashing of Paraguay, forcing him out of the Final, but his replacement, Estudiantes de La Plata first-teamer Diego Colotto, turned out to be yet another revelation, strong and quick-thinking.

Newell's Old Boys midfielder Maximiliano Rodriguez was another candidate for top player, showing outstanding technique and a strength of character that lifted the whole team.

By comparison, San Lorenzo playmaker Leandro Romagnoli was a little subdued, but there is little doubt that he has a great future. Others meriting a special mention are Boca defender Nicolas Burdisso and Sunderland midfielders Julio Arca and Nicolas Medina.

The pick of the players from the other teams was headed by Ghana's number 10, Derek Boateng. The outstanding playmaker, who is a Panathinaikos first-team regular, idolises

Strength of character...Rodriguez

Diego Maradona and shows a similar ability to orchestrate his team's play.

Forward Djibril Cisse was France's best player, displaying agility, good pace and an instinctive scoring ability. He finished joint second-highest scorer on six goals with Adriano of Brazil, who also looks an excellent prospect.

Two players who caught the eye during the group stage, before their teams were eliminated, were dynamic, speedy Costa Rican striker Winston Parks and Ecuadorian central defender Jorge Guagua, who showed excellent timing and technical ability.

Eric Weil

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Market traders

Real Madrid's world-record signing of Zidane is a marketing gamble, says Jeff King

Historic handover...Zidane receives the number 5 shirt from Alfredo Di Stefano

IT MAY seem an impertinent thing to say about the reigning FIFA World Footballer of the Year, but Real Madrid's decision to pay £47.2m for Zinedine Zidane had as much to do with marketing as football.

Says who? The man who hatched the world-record deal, that's who. "Our strategy is clear," says Real Madrid president Florentino Perez. "I've always said this club should have the best players in the world. Why? Because they're the most profitable ones. Signing a world-class star means great international projection for Real Madrid and that translates into an economic profit. From a financial point of view, Zidane will be a great investment, the same as Figo has been."

Billionaire constructor Perez (think Donald Trump without the flair for publicity or the risible haircut) is as transparent about his personal role model as he is about his business strategy. Growing up in Madrid in the late 1950s, Perez was seduced by the Real side that won the first five European Cups. The behind-the-scenes architect of those triumphs was Santiago Bernabeu, Real's president between 1943 and 1978. The legendary patriarch provided his on-field alter ego Alfredo Di Stefano with a new world-class team-mate every year. Sometimes the headline-grabbing recruits made the team better (Puskas, Kopa), sometimes they got lost in the mix (Didi), but they all contributed to Real's aura of invincibility. Home-grown hero Raul is to Perez what adopted son Di Stefano was to Bernabeu. As intimidatory sidekicks go, Zidane and Luis Figo are not bad for starters.

The timing of Zidane's arrival is crucial. Like all Spanish clubs, Real Madrid lag behind oft-quoted role model Manchester United in the commercial stakes. Perez is determined to use the hullabaloo surrounding Madrid's centenary season as a springboard to challenge United's supremacy.

The presence of the world's best footballer is the cream on the marketing cake. Overall, Zidane will cost Real Madrid nearly £70m over the next four seasons. Whether or not he generates a profit only time will tell, but one thing is clear – the moment he signed on the dotted line, the cash registers started ringing. An estimated 300 newspapers conceded the transfer front-page status; that's the kind of worldwide impact Madrid and Adidas (sponsors of both player and club) are counting on.

Real Madrid plan to open 100 shops in four continents during the next year; all things Zizou – including an estimated 500,000 replica shirts – are expected to top the shopping lists, particularly in France and the Arab world. The Bernabeu was already a practical sell-out last season, but Madrid's pay-per-view income is expected to rocket.

Zidane was typically mute at his introductory press conference, but the following day granted an exclusive interview to, you guessed it, the club's digital pay-channel, Real Madrid TV. Madrid's official website receives an average 100,000 hits a day; the day Zidane joined the club it got 800,000.

And given that Perez has acquired 90 per cent of the Frenchman's image rights (in return for a guaranteed £5.4m a year after tax), Real Madrid will make money every time Zidane steps in front of a camera or endorses a product.

But will Perez's attempts to secure an optimum return on his investment affect performances in those 90-minute events played on grass between commercial engagements? Real Madrid already have a £1.5m offer to play a one-off friendly in Egypt and there's talk of 10 showcase friendlies to mark the 2001 centenary.

What does coach Vicente Del Bosque make of that potentially debilitating calendar? Figo and Raul both played some 65 games last season. Heaven knows what they feel about an increased workload in a season that ends with the World Cup finals.

By his own admission, Zidane has never been one of football's natural athletes. If he decides to pace himself, who will reap the benefit, Real Madrid or France? Lest we forget, Zizou's reputation has been forged on the international stage, not at club level.

The Frenchman says his burning ambition is to win the Champions League. Two no-shows in the Final and bottom place in the 2000-01 opening group stage is his not especially impressive CV so far.

Juventus director general Luciano Moggi has revealed that Zidane initially pitched for one more season in Turin and a name-his-own-terms move to Real Madrid in 2002. The Italians could have spent the next year trying to convince Zidane to stay. Tellingly, they preferred to cash in on a player who won no club honours in three of his five seasons in Turin; the last three.

Without Zidane, Raul and co outscored all-comers at home and abroad last season. Paying a world-record fee for yet another great attacking player may be a great PR move, but the Frenchman's arrival does nothing to address Real Madrid's vulnerabilities.

Centre-half remains the problem position. Fernando Hierro has been a defensive rock for a decade but fading legs mean he increasingly lives on wits alone. Spain coach Jose Camacho used eight different centre-halves last year, yet Hierro's partner, Aitor Karanka, remains uncapped. That is no coincidence.

Zidane's arrival could lead to Ivan Helguera dropping into defence, but while the midfielder has performed heroically as an occasional sweeper, he has looked uncomfortable when deployed in a back four.

The outlay on Zidane means plans to buy a more reliable right-back than Michel Salgado have also

been temporarily shelved. Spain's first-choice, Manuel Pablo, and the Milan-bound Cosmin Contra were both considered too expensive in the circumstances. Neither do Madrid boast adequate cover for Roberto Carlos, a player who has gone on the record to bemoan his hectic transatlantic schedule.

And coach Del Bosque still has no genuine centre-forward as competition for the injury-prone Fernando Morientes. By contrast, Guti, Raul, Figo, Savio and, at a push, Steve McManaman and Pedro Munitis, can all play in the hole behind the forwards, i.e. in Zidane's position.

That leads to another legitimate question about the Zizou effect. Are the new model Real Madrid a case of too many chiefs and not enough Indians? World-class footballers stamp their authority on matches, but how many players can stamp their authority on the same game? In Zidane, Figo and Raul, Madrid have the last two European Footballers of the Year and a serious contender for this year's award. Not since Manchester United's Best, Charlton and Law trinity have one team boasted three European number ones in their ranks.

"If Barcelona sign Riquelme they'll need three balls," says Johan Cruyff of Boca Juniors ball-hogger Riquelme, "one for Rivaldo, one for Riquelme and one for the rest!" By that criterion, Madrid will need half a dozen.

Barça recruit...Argentina Under-20 star Saviola

A study by *France Football* reveals that Zidane spends twice as long in possession over 90 minutes as any of his international team-mates. Didier Deschamps may have been happy to play Tonto to Zizou's Lone Ranger, but will Figo be content to merely fetch and carry? Zidane is also used to taking all the free-kicks that matter. Has anybody told Roberto Carlos?

Zidane makes Real Madrid a more attractive side, and by extension, a more marketable side, but for roughly the same amount of money, the Spanish champions could have recruited Nesta or Campbell, Manuel Pablo or Contra and Filippo Inzaghi or Mark Viduka (to cite just six players on their shopping list before the Zidane deal). Three of those six would have made Madrid a more balanced team. They would also have made them a much younger outfit.

'Will Figo be content to fetch and carry? Zidane is used to taking all the free-kicks that matter. Has anyone told Roberto Carlos?'

Hierro is 33. Zidane and Figo are both 30 next year. Roberto Carlos is 28. Raul is the only key Madrid player yet to reach his prime. Zizou and co make for a spectacular centenary marketing pitch, but Real Madrid face some major rebuilding in the not-too-distant future.

Unlike Real, Barcelona have invested in longer-term prospects. "I prefer quality young players who are hungry to win things," says Barça coach Carles Rexach of Javier Saviola, 19, Fabio Rochemback, 19, Geovanni, 21, and Philippe Christanval, 22. "Stoichkov, Rivaldo and Figo all exploded after arriving at Camp Nou; hopefully our latest signings will do the same."

Ronaldo's 45-goal return in 1996-97 is the most recent precedent, but for every teenage over-achiever there's a Witschge, Simao or Zenden.

The £21.7m Barcelona paid for Javier 'The Rabbit' Saviola makes the pint-sized striker the world's most expensive teenager. Fifty-eight goals in 120 games for River Plate are not to be sniffed at, but piling up the goals in Argentina is one thing, repeating the trick in Spain quite another.

In reality, Barcelona's decision to recruit promising youngsters rather than tried and tested performers was dictated by circumstances.

"These days, any experienced world-class footballer costs £25m or more," says Rexach. "Look how much Zidane, Thuram and Rui Costa moved for. In order to rebuild we needed to sign four or five players in key positions. If we'd gone for proven players we'd have needed to spend £100m or more, and that was out of the question."

Ironically, Rivaldo's winner against Valencia on the final day of last season tied Barcelona's hands. If the Brazilian's 90th-minute overhead kick had landed in the stand instead of the net, and by extension, Barça in the UEFA Cup instead of the Champions League, Joan Gaspart would have crawled to Rome on hands and knees to accept Lazio's £30m offer for his star player.

As it was, the last thing the Barça president needed in a summer dominated by boardroom resignations and public scraps about misdirected commissions (notably in the case of Geovanni) was a mutiny on his hands because he'd dumped Rivaldo.

The £220m Real Madrid are set to bank for their city-centre training site means they could happily spend almost £50m on one player. Barcelona, by contrast, need to spread their resources. A month before the new season began, the Catalans had invested £60m in six players.

Saviola may be the most eye-catching signing, but for the first time in years, Barcelona have at least attempted to address a chronic lack of balance. Defensive recruits Christanval and Patrik Andersson (who at nearly 30 is no rookie, but came cheap from Bayern Munich at £4.8m) couldn't possibly make the centre of Barça's rearguard any worse. And with recent Spain debutant Carles Puyol set to make the right-back slot his own, all Rexach needs is a replacement for the declining Sergi and he might actually boast a defence that isn't a misnomer.

Meanwhile, the coach has compared Brazilian midfielder Rochemback to Dunga; if the tough-tackling teenager wins half as many balls as the former Brazil captain used to, he will go a long way to solving Barça's other major problem – a soft-touch midfield.

Zidane's world-record transfer was sealed the day Real Madrid icon Alfredo Di Stefano celebrated his 75th birthday. The Argentinian was a one-man precursor of Total Football and fulcrum of the side that won the first five European Cups. His 49 goals in 58 European Cup games is still a record. 'The Blond Arrow' cost Madrid £20,000 in 1953, a meagre £600,000 at today's prices. What does that tell you about football's galloping inflation?

"Zidane is not worth £45m, no player is." Says who? Not Di Stefano, who as Real Madrid's honorary president was a gracious master of ceremonies at Zidane's presentation, but Zizou himself. Real Madrid will be praying that's one call the French ace gets wrong.

● Real will pay just over 13 billion pesetas for Zidane, an official fee of 11.5bn pesetas, with 1bn pesetas in interest payments and 538,000 pesetas in commission fees. At exchange rates on the day of the transfer, that was the equivalent of £47.2m.

Real v the rest

Jeff King in Barcelona previews the new season in La Liga

ALAVES

Seven defeats in their last eight games last season and the loss of Javi Moreno, Cosmin Contra and Ivan Tomic may suggest the Alaves bubble has burst, but don't write off the UEFA Cup runners-up just yet. Mane, Spain's longest-serving coach (five seasons), didn't turn down a lucrative offer from Valencia because he's a masochist. Uruguayan youngster Ivan Alonso was a prolific understudy for Moreno last term, and the Basques' nose for a bargain means Romanian recruit Bogdan Mara (from Dinamo Bucharest) deserves the benefit of the doubt. Veteran defender Llorens (Atletico) and midfield destroyer Turiel (Valladolid) will bolster a leaky rearguard.

ATHLETIC BILBAO

A new president (Javier Uria), a new technical director (Andoni Zubizarreta) and a new coach (Jupp Heynckes). Unfortunately, the club's Basque-players-only philosophy means the only additions to a lacklustre squad are spotty-faced locals. Motivation is a problem, too. Still only in their mid-20s, Julen Guerrero, Joseba Etxeberria, Ismael Urzaiz and Santiago Ezquerro have all stagnated. The returning Heynkes insists eight League titles and 23 Spanish Cups is a heritage that demands greater ambition. No trophies in 17 years suggests that's a pipe dream.

BARCELONA

One year after his election, Barça president Joan Gaspart still presides over a deeply divided club. Pep Guardiola's parting shot summed up the Barça zeitgeist: "Half the fans turn up hoping the team will lose so they can barrack the board." Carles Rexach is the club's fourth coach in the five years since Johan Cruyff was sacked. And although the early League fixtures look less than demanding, to survive in the longer term Cruyff's former assistant will need a better return on new arrivals Javier Saviola, Geovanni, Fabio Rochemback, Patrik Andersson and Philippe Christanval than his predecessor, Llorenc Serra Ferrer, got from Overmars, Petit, Dutruel, Gerard, Alfonso and De la Pena.

BETIS

This time two years ago, Betis president Manuel Ruiz de Lopera pitched his club as a genuine alternative to Real Madrid and Barcelona. One relegation campaign and a nail-biting Second Division ride later, the fanciful guru has ditched his delusions of grandeur. Former Rayo coach Juande Ramos will build a team that is as ferociously competitive as any in Spain. Strikers Amato and Gaston Casas and baby-faced midfield trio Joaquin, Capi and Varela all impressed last season. If only Denilson would start living up to his reputation.

CELTA VIGO

Only Mallorca won more points in the second half of last season, as Celta scaled the table to finish sixth. Coach Victor Fernandez's team still flatter to deceive, though. Despite the impressive approach work of midfield czars Alexander Mostovoi and Valery Karpin, they scored a modest 51 goals last year (with the strikers managing just 19 combined). Unless new recruit Florian Maurice rediscovers his shooting boots after two injury-riddled years at Marseille, expect more of the same.

DEPORTIVO LA CORUNA

Last summer Augosto Lendoiro invested £45m in nine new players. This year, the wheeler-dealer president has kept the chequebook under lock and key, and it is easy to see why. The Diego Tristan/ Roy Makaay pairing – 35 League goals between them – should get better; out-of-contract acquisition Goran Djorovic (Celta) and youthful right-back Hector (Sevilla) provide depth at the back, while Amavisca (Racing) is a more athletic alternative to Fran on the left of midfield. Depor's final game is at home to Real Madrid; don't bet against it being the title decider.

ESPANYOL

The Barcelona side are a well-organised, defensively sound unit with one major defect: a powder-puff attack. Espanyol finished a creditable ninth last season despite scoring just 46 goals in 38 games. Raul Tamudo and Martin Posse are tricky players who huff and puff but rarely blow the house down. A third tiny-tot striker, on-loan Mexican international Juan Francisco Palencia, is not the answer. Espanyol's lack of resources dictate comings and goings. Fortunately for coach Paco Flores, Spain's lower classes look far weaker now than this time last year.

LAS PALMAS

Two-thirds of the way through last season newly-promoted Las Palmas reached the giddy heights of seventh place, but then won only four of their final 17 games and endured major off-field turmoil (passport-faking, dressing-room punch-ups, unpaid wages). Top scorer Guayre and fellow Spain Under-21 Jorge are gone and no reinforcements worthy of the name have arrived to replace them. New coach Fernando Vazquez made his reputation in similar circumstances at Compostela, but he's no magician.

MALAGA

Malaga have been a breath of fresh air since their top-flight return in 1998; an unfancied side that plays enterprising football home and away. Livewire striker Dario Silva and midfield quartet Rufete, Movilla, Agostinho and De los Santos were all summer targets for bigger clubs. Tellingly, Malaga's new recruits Ivan Leko (Hajduk Split), Gerardo (Valencia) and Duda (Cadiz) were not. At 65, Joaquin Peiro is Spain's oldest coach. He'll need all his savvy to prevent his team becoming downwardly mobile.

MALLORCA

Mallorca were Spain's form side in the second half of last season, a club record third place and Champions League qualification the result of 40 points in 19 games. However, Turkish defender Fatih Akyel is the only notable addition to a very shallow squad, while former Sociedad coach Bernd Krauss for Atletico Madrid-bound Luis Aragones is an unpromising change on the bench. Samuel Eto'o, Luque

New boy at Barça...French defender Philippe Christanval

and Nova will continue to improve, but with Nadal, Engonga and Soler all nearer 40 than 30, Mallorca are unlikely to thrive on two fronts.

OSASUNA

Osasuna's decision to stick with coach Miguel Angel Lotina last season proved a wise one. The Pamplona club escaped relegation only on the final day but that was as good as anybody could possibly expect from such a threadbare squad. The main problem was a lack of attacking alternatives to 14-goal youngster Ivan Rosado. If the Australian John Aloisi delivers on his promise of 20 goals, Osasuna might avoid another nail-biter.

RAYO VALLECANO

Juande Ramos performed miracles on a shoestring at Rayo for several years but a League-low 14 points in the second half of last season persuaded him to take his hard-won reputation to greener pastures. The board reacted by selling their best two players, Gerhard Poschner and Michel, as well. New coach Andoni Goikoetxea's unimpressive pedigree at Salamanca, Compostela, Numancia and Racing makes the outlook in south Madrid even more gloomy.

REAL MADRID

"With Zidane on board we'll be the best team in the world by a distance," says Luis Figo, not a man given to brash statements (if there is one thing Figo, Zidane and Raul have in common it's their tight-lipped demeanour in front of the cameras). Throw Roberto Carlos, Guti, Pedro Munitis, Fernando Morientes and Steve McManaman into the mix and Real will definitely be the most entertaining side around. Rivals can only pray that Juve owner Gianni Agnelli's jibe – "Zidane is more entertaining than effective" – is borne out. Vicente Del Bosque's team still have problems at the back, but opponents will spend too much time doing their own defending to exploit them.

REAL SOCIEDAD

A chaotic 2000-01 season was saved by John Toshack, who made the Basques as difficult to beat at Anoeta as tradition dictates, and saved them with something to spare. The Welshman has become something of an itinerant mercenary in recent years but his affection for Real – and his San Sebastian home – is genuine. Bjorn-Tore Kvarme (Saint-Etienne) and Barkero (Eibar) are useful additions to the squad, and a UEFA Cup place is not out of the question.

SEVILLA

Sevilla were promoted as Second Division champions with no major additions to the squad that was relegated a year earlier. Local coach Joaquin Caparros has eight new players this time around, but the fact they cost barely £1m between them is not an encouraging sign. Uruguayan strike duo Nicolas Olivera and Marcelo Zalayeta thrived in the Second Division after flopping in 1999-00. Either they come good at the second attempt in the top flight or the white half of Seville is in trouble.

TENERIFE

They might finish above their arch-rivals Las Palmas but that's unlikely to keep Tenerife up. Brazilian passport-faker Barata is suspended for a year and promising young strikers Luis Garcia and Mista have both been sold. President Javier Perez describes his team as "top-flight babies". Given Perez's lack of patience and a lack of quality players, coach Pepe Mel's top-flight debut is unlikely to get past the suckling stage.

VALENCIA

Last season's cruel finale and the departure of Gaizka Mendieta, coach Hector Cuper and president Pedro Cortes have provoked talk of a sinking ship. But it's not all doom and gloom. Sergio (Espanyol), Rufete (Malaga), Marchena (Benfica), Mista (Tenerife) and Belletti (Sao Paulo) have been recruited with barely a dent on the £45m profit from the Champions League windfall. Sergio is a genuine all-rounder while Rufete is an industrious presence on the right flank. Vicente completes a trio of recent Spain debutants in midfield. Zlatko Zahovic to Benfica for Spain Under-21 defender Marchena was a great piece of business too. Brazilian full-backs Fabio Aurelio and Belletti give the veteran defence some useful new blood. If new president Jaime Orti provides coach Rafa Benitez with a more prolific goalscorer than John Carew or Juan Sanchez, Valencia are a good outside bet for the title.

Sold by Valencia...Gaizka Mendieta

VALLADOLID

When the best news a club offers its fans is that 37-year-old midfielder Eusebio isn't hanging up his boots for another year you know you're in trouble. Tellingly, the £8m Valladolid made on defensive stalwarts Torres Gomez, Garcia Calvo and Gabriel Heinze was used to eliminate crippling debts, not buy reinforcements. Long-time backroom boy Pepe More deserves a shot at the job, but no coach deserves such poor raw material.

VILLARREAL

Seventh place was a major achievement in Villarreal's second top-flight campaign and coach Victor Munoz, who recently signed a contract extension to 2004, has made some shrewd recent buys. Great things are expected of 21-year-old striker Guayre (Las Palmas), Sergio Ballesteros (Rayo) adds physical presence to the defence, Constantin Galca (Espanyol) is a gifted playmaker, and winger Quique Martin (Salamanca) will provide forward Martin Palermo with good service.

ZARAGOZA

Any club that consistently sells its best players (Poyet, Kily Gonzalez, Gustavo Lopez, Milosevic) without investing in reinforcements is tempting fate. After several years at odds with the fans for his Scrooge-like habits, president Alfonso Solans has decided to invest in a safety net. Zaragoza paid a club record £5m for target man Goran Drulic (Red Star Belgrade) and £1.7m for experienced Brazilian defender Esquerdinha (Porto). With veterans Roberto Acuna, Jose Ignacio and Juanele continuing to thrive, expect the Zaragoza yo-yo to bounce back.

Fast and loose

Major scandals, major moves – it's been another hectic summer in Serie A. Paddy Agnew reports

Happier times...things have not been so rosy lately for Sergio Cragnotti and Lazio

THUS far, it has been a hot and heavy Serie A summer. This was probably inevitable, given that last season ended late (on June 24 with Verona's relegation play-off win against Reggina) and that the new season starts early (final weekend of August) because of next summer's World Cup.

With the shortest summer break of recent times, Italian clubs, players, agents and lawyers have all been busy in a whirlwind of transfer deals and disciplinary hearings.

In the space of a torrid July fortnight, Fiorentina were almost declared bankrupt, Lazio boss Sergio Cragnotti threatened to quit the game, appeal hearings reduced previous sentences in both the nandrolone and passport scandals and, to top it all, the world's No 1 footballer, Zinedine Zidane, upped and left Juventus for Real Madrid.

Fiorentina have long made off-the-pitch headlines, although usually in relation to their all too 'enthusiastic' fans. This summer, however, the club made the front pages when their major shareholder, cinema tycoon Vittorio Cecchi Gori, was placed under investigation in connection with an alleged money-laundering fraud. The normally eloquent Cecchi Gori for once was at a loss for words when he found himself face to face with police officers who had burst into the bedroom of his luxurious central Rome villa early on the morning of July 5.

Even before the police investigation, it had been clear that Fiorentina were in dire economic difficulty, with the club filing for bankruptcy at the end of June.

This had prompted the inevitable angry reaction of the Florentine fans, who called on Cecchi Gori to sell up. Notwithstanding the subsequent police investigation, however, Fiorentina were given a last-minute reprieve in mid-July when a Florence court postponed a ruling on the club's insolvency.

In effect, this allowed Fiorentina to go ahead and register for next season. Furthermore, tribunal chairman Raffaele D'Amora explained the court's thinking when pointing out that the team "have positive prospects for the future" and adding "Fiorentina are free to do whatever they want". This includes putting themselves on the market for a new owner.

Doubtless, more developments can be expected on the Fiorentina front. In the meantime, though, the most obvious fall-out from the club's difficulties was the sale of the family jewellery, starting with Portuguese playmaker Rui Costa to Milan for £28million and Italian international goalkeeper Francesco Toldo to Internazionale for £18m.

Those were two of the most notable transfers in a summer of surprise moves. For example, after spending the past four summers resisting offers for French defender Lilian Thuram and goalkeeper Gigi Buffon, Parma this year opted to offload both of them to Juventus, for £24m and £32m respectively.

Juventus, of course, were involved in the biggest move of all, that of Zidane to Real Madrid for £47m. Given recurrent mutterings from the great Frenchman about his desire for a change of air, this move was not entirely unexpected.

After five seasons with the Old Lady, Zidane was doubtless just a little disappointed not to have won more. The man who in the past three seasons has won both the World Cup and the European Championship with France has, in the same period, picked up only one League title with Juventus.

Furthermore, the experience of losing successive Champions League Finals (1997, 1998), not to mention losing successive League titles on the last day (2000, 2001), all contributed to the Frenchman's desire to be gone.

It was certainly not without significance that at his final Juve news conference, Zidane applauded the club's busy transfer campaign, saying: "Finally, the club has bought some really great players. I'm just sorry that they didn't do it earlier when I was still here."

One of those "really great" players was Czech midfielder Pavel Nedved, whose £25m transfer from Lazio almost prompted a revolution at the Rome club.

Lazio fans, already disappointed to see Argentinian midfield genius Juan Sebastian Veron depart for Manchester United for £28m, were so outraged by the sale of Nedved that they expressed their anger in a noisy, all-night-long demonstration outside the home of club owner Cragnotti.

Stung by what he perceived as a monstrous affront to his dignity, Cragnotti plunged the club into total crisis next day by threatening to walk out of soccer. While that threat was subsequently retracted – if only partially – Lazio's future is suddenly looking less than rosy.

The departures of Veron and Nedved, and the failure to land 'big fish' Rivaldo from Barcelona, would suggest that next season's Lazio will be less competitive than the side of the past two seasons. They may yet surprise us, however, between now and the season's opening.

Of course, Veron's exit from Serie A had much to do with his involvement in Italy's ongoing passport scandal. The tensions provoked by the fact that the Argentinian was involved not only in the Italian federation's inquiry but also in a separate investigation carried out by the Rome state prosecutor's office persuaded him it was time to move on.

Thus, when the federation's disciplinary court cleared him of irregularities in early July, the way was left clear for his move to the English champions.

Veron was one of 14 non-European Union players from six clubs all accused of 'unsporting behaviour' over the manner in which they obtained Italian passports. But while the July judgments dealt out harsh one-year bans on such as Inter's Uruguayan striker Alvaro Recoba, Milan's Brazilian goalkeeper Dida and two former Roma players, Argentinian Gustavo Bartelt and Brazilian Fabio Junior, Veron received a full acquittal.

Lazio, however, were fined £630,000, reportedly for 'lack of vigilance', while club official Felice Pulici was suspended until June 2002.

Veron and Lazio had always argued that any 'falsification' in the player's application for Italian citizenship had been committed, unknown to them, by the Argentinian agency hired to trace Veron's Calabrian origins. Furthermore, Lazio claimed that Veron had never actually been classified as an EU player on team-sheets.

"I am very satisfied with the disciplinary court's ruling," commented Cragnotti. "It has upheld what I have always said, namely that in the case of Veron, both the club and the player were the victims of fraudulent behaviour. My only regret concerns our club director Felice Pulici, who was also a victim of this whole scam."

The federation ruling may also have been influenced by the Rome state prosecutor's investigation into charges of document falsification. This case is due to come to court in October. Clearly, if the state prosecution were to acquit Veron and Lazio of any wrongdoing, then the federation would have found itself in a difficult position if it had already imposed either a fine or a suspension for the same 'crime'.

Furthermore, before the federation's ruling, Cragnotti had already warned that he would contest any fine or suspension handed out by the federation in the state courts.

In all, 13 players and six officials were suspended, while Inter, Milan, Roma, Lazio, Sampdoria, Udinese and Vicenza all received hefty fines.

The federation's disciplinary procedures were again the centre of attention just two weeks later when the 'CAF' (federation appeals court) halved the suspensions of 'nandrolone' players Salvatore Monaco and Stefano Bucchi of Perugia and Andrea Da Rold of Pescara. These three were the first of nine Serie A and Serie B players to be banned this season, after testing positive for nandrolone.

Their cases had gone largely unnoticed until two big names, Lazio's Portuguese defender Fernando Couto and Juve's Dutch dynamo Edgar Davids, were both banned this spring after similar positive tests. The fact that the CAF halved the original 16-month suspension of Monaco, Bucchi and Da Rold would suggest that, barring unlikely developments, both Couto and Davids can expect the same treatment, so both can expect to be back in action this autumn, probably by November.

At the end of an *annus horribilis* marked by the Atalanta match-fixing scandal, by 'passportopoli' and the nandrolone affair, Italian fans could hardly be blamed for fearing that the 'beautiful game' is not quite as *bello* as it once was.

According to law, the federation's rulings in all these cases may well have been totally correct, interpreting its own rules as best it could. Morally, however, you wonder about the impact of a set of judgments which would seem to suggest that you can cheat – by trying to match-fix, by taking drugs or by falsifying passport documentation – and get away with it, or at worst, be given a short suspension.

Jaded and cynical Italian fans, however, are unlikely to be worried. All the signs already suggest that some of the biggest clubs are heading for record season ticket sales.

The show goes on.

'Finally, Juventus have bought some really good players. I am just sorry that they didn't do it earlier when I was still here'

– Zinedine Zidane

Juventus here I come...Pavel Nedved

Life after Zidane

Juventus look the strongest despite Zizou's departure. Paddy Agnew assesses the Serie A contenders

Up for the challenge...Hector Cuper has taken over the reins at Internazionale

ATALANTA

A key year for the Bergamo club as they attempt a quality leap into the UEFA Cup zone. After years of relegation battling, Atalanta provided one of the biggest surprises of last season by travelling in the top four for most of the year. The club have compensated for the sales of such as Massimo Donati (Milan), Cristian Zenoni (Juventus), Ivan Pelizzoli and Sebastiano Siviglia (both Roma) with the purchase of Massimo Taibi (Reggina), Luca Saudati, Gianni Comandini (both Milan), Pierluigi Orlandini (Brescia) and Ousmane Dabo (Parma). Not all the replacements may prove as good as their predecessors, however, and the UEFA Cup may be a challenge too far.

BOLOGNA

With Matteo Brighi (Juventus) and Fabio Macellari (Inter) their biggest summer signings to date, it is hard to avoid the impression that Bologna are more concerned about cash than a competitive squad. The departures of Brazilian Lima (Roma) and winger Jonatan Binotto (Inter) hardly help a cause which continues to be led by golden oldies, goalkeeper Gianluca Pagliuca (34) and striker Beppe Signori (33). A mid-table finish would be the height of Bologna ambitions.

BRESCIA

With £10million spent on Vicenza striker Luca Toni, plus the mid-summer participation in the InterToto Cup, Brescia clearly intend to improve on last season's excellent run. With Roberto Baggio still calling the shots up front and the canny Carlo Mazzone still on the coach's bench, another good year is a strong possibility.

CHIEVO

In their first year in Serie A, the little club from a Verona suburb will clearly have only one objective – survival. Goalkeeper Cristiano Lupatelli (Roma), Brazilian Eriberto (Bologna) as well as Andrea Zanchetta and Massimo Marazzina (both Reggina) have been recruited for the battle. It remains to be seen if the squad will prove up to the task.

FIORENTINA

The club's threatened bankruptcy and the fact owner Vittorio Cecchi Gori is currently being investigated over an alleged money-laundering scam cast much doubt over pre-season preparations. Portuguese star Rui Costa (Milan), goalkeeper Francesco Toldo (Inter) and Saliou Lassissi (Roma) have already been offloaded, and more may follow. Italian Cup winners and UEFA Cup qualifiers last season, they are unlikely to do so well this year.

INTERNAZIONALE

Was there any reason, other than money of course, for Hector Cuper's decision to take over at the helm of arguably the most difficult club in Italy? On paper, this is one of the world's strongest squads but Inter have been one of the least consistent sides of recent seasons. The Argentinian's prospects have been boosted not only by Christian Vieri's decision to stay but also by the purchase of Portuguese winger Sergio Conceicao (Parma), keeper Francesco Toldo (Fiorentina), Danish defender Thomas Helveg (Milan), midfielder Cristiano Zanetti (Roma), Turks Emre Belozoglu and Okan Buruk (Galatasaray), defender Marco Materazzi (Perugia) and Sierra Leone striker Mohammed Kallon (Vicenza). If Ronaldo recovers fitness and form – it is a very big 'if' – then all is possible.

JUVENTUS

Logically, Juventus have to start as title favourites, and that is despite the departure of Zinedine Zidane. Two successive title defeats on the last day of the season not to mention first phase Champions League humiliation last autumn not only cost coach Carlo Ancelotti his job but they have also left the 'Old Lady' desperately hungry for success. With Marcello Lippi back as coach, and having conducted arguably the most effective transfer campaign of the Italian summer, Juve have put together a squad that should see them remain competitive in both Serie A and the Champions League. French defender Lilian Thuram (Parma), goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon (Parma) and Czech midfielder Pavel Nedved (Lazio) are the new buys. Even though Alessandro Del Piero has done well in the past when called on to replace Zidane, Lippi is more likely to go for a 4-4-2 line-up, with Del Piero as a striker and not a playmaker. Juventus are likely to prove aggressively athletic, spurred on by the revamped hunger of club and coach.

LAZIO

The departure of midfielders Pavel Nedved (Juve) and Juan Veron (Manchester United), not to mention owner Sergio Cragnotti's threat to abandon football in the wake of fan protests prompted by the above sales, has left a large question mark hanging over Lazio. At this stage, they will do well to maintain their high level of the past four seasons, when they have unquestionably been one of the strongest clubs in the land. Lazio do, however, boast some intriguing new talent in Brazilian Cesar (Sao Caetano) and Italian internationals Stefano Fiore and Giuliano Giannichedda (both Udinese). Argentinian striker Claudio Lopez, injured for much of last season, is certain to do better this year, while his partner in attack, compatriot Hernan Crespo, remains just about the best there is – witness his chart-topping 26 League goals last season. Coach Dino Zoff makes fewer mistakes than most and his sides are always competitive.

LECCE

New boys Emiliano Billiotti (Ravenna), Javier Chevanton (Danubio) and Djuric Winklaar (Heerenveen) are not exactly household names but, even if Lecce's transfer activity has so far been modest, it would be unwise to suggest that this tough, combative little club cannot again win their eternal relegation battle. The best news is that they have held on to coach Alberto Cavasin, who has kept them in Serie A for the past two seasons.

MILAN

Portuguese star Rui Costa (Fiorentina), Spanish striker Javi Moreno (Alaves), French defender Cyrille Domoraud (Inter), Romanian defender Cosmin Contra (Alaves) plus Italians Filippo Inzaghi (Juventus) and Massimo Donati (Atalanta) represent an impressive transfer haul for a Milan side who proved bitterly disappointing last season. No one was more disappointed than Silvio Berlusconi, club owner and Italian Prime Minister, who sacked Alberto Zaccheroni last spring then encouraged the hiring not only of Rui Costa but also Turkish coach Fatih Terim (ex-Galatasaray and Fiorentina). Of all Milan's new boys, Terim could be the most important. He learned fast during his short spell with Fiorentina, and that club's loss could be Milan's gain. A good UEFA Cup run would be the least the PM expects.

PARMA

By the end of last season, it was easy to predict Parma would do well in this year's Champions League. Tough and competitive under replacement coach Renzo Ulivieri, they ended the campaign with a fine late run to secure fourth place. Then came the sale of Lilian Thuram and Gianluigi Buffon (both Juve), Sergio Conceicao (Inter) and Brazilian striker Marcio Amoroso (Dortmund). Italy defender Fabio Cannavaro could also be on the move before the summer is through. The good news, however, is that coach Ulivieri has been confirmed for this season, while the club have made some intriguing buys – Japanese star Hidetoshi Nakata (Roma), Danish defender Martin Laursen (Verona), Belarus defender Sergei Gurenko (Roma), French keeper Sebastien Frey (Inter), Italian Under-21 captain Matteo Ferrari (Inter) and Brazilian Alex (Palmeiras). Ulivieri, in charge of a 'class' team for the first time, will be keen to make the most of his chance.

PERUGIA

Commentators and rivals alike have learned not to under-estimate Perugia. Three years ago, they sprang the Nakata surprise, while last year they introduced a previously unknown third division player in Fabio Liverani, who made his Italy debut and ended the season on the shortlist for Italy's 2002 World Cup squad. Therefore, everyone will be watching such as Argentinian De Francesco (Independiente), Belgians

Juventus new boy...Gianluigi Buffon

Maury and Jacquemin (both Standard Liege), Galeri (Anderlecht), Grabinski (Lanus) and Soncin (Vigevano) with particular attention. Even without Marco Materazzi (Inter), Luca Saudati (Atalanta) and Mirko Pieri (Udinese), Perugia could spring more surprises, especially since charismatic baseball cap-wearing coach Serse Cosmi, brilliantly successful in his first Serie A season last year, remains in charge.

PIACENZA

Staying up will be the name of the game for Piacenza, no strangers to the difficulties of Serie A relegation battles. Piacenza's policy of fielding an all-Italian line-up has been waived aside to hire Brazilian Matuzalem (Napoli). Other new boys such as Francesco Palmieri (Salernitana), Eusebio Di Francesco (Roma) and Dario Hubner (Brescia) all bring much-needed experience to the Piacenza cause. Unlikely to be pretty, they could do enough to stay up.

ROMA

During last season's title winning run, coach Fabio Capello underlined his capacity for 'real-politik' strategy by sacrificing UEFA Cup success (in favour of eventual winners Liverpool) in order to concentrate on the Serie A title contest. Capello may repeat that strategy this season when Roma are likely to save their best efforts for the Champions League rather than for the Serie A battle. With new boys such as striker Antonio Cassano (Bari), keeper Ivan Pelizzoli and defender Sebastiano Siviglia (both Atalanta), Brazilian midfielder Lima (Bologna) and Ivorian defender Saliou Lassissi (Fiorentina), the squad looks stronger in depth, if not quality. Another of last season's heroes, unsettled striker Vincenzo Montella, has decided to stay. Capello is thus left with a set of attacking options which also include Gabriel Batistuta, Marco Delvecchio and Cassano, with all of them playing in front of the mercurial playmaking of Francesco Totti. Roma may not repeat last year's League title success but are likely to prove very hard to beat in Europe.

TORINO

Back in Serie A after one year in B, Torino took out an extra-special insurance policy when starting off pre-season training with a visit to Pope John Paul II, who just happened to be on his holidays close by their training camp in Val D'Aosta. Uruguayan Jose Franco (Penarol), Cristiano Lucarelli (Lecce) and two old boys, Fabio Pecchia (Napoli) and Marco Ferrante (Inter), have all been recruited to help ensure Serie A survival – which should prove within Torino's reach.

UDINESE

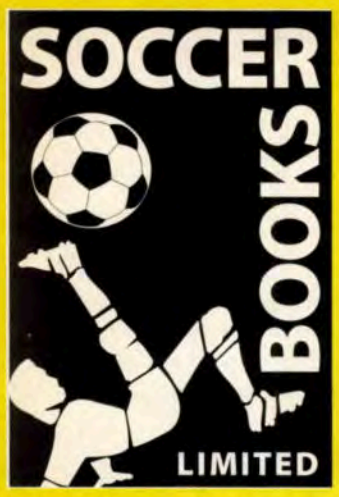
Udinese sprang a surprise when naming former Switzerland, Inter, Blackburn and, most recently, FC Copenhagen coach Roy Hodgson to replace Luigi De Canio. The Englishman will need all his footballing savvy if he is to create a winning formation out of a foreigner-dominated squad that includes new boys Brazilian Marco Paulo (Cruzeiro), Spaniards Bernal and Jove (Murcia), Dane Kroldrup (B93 Copenhagen) and Greek Dimitrios Nalitzis (PAOK). A mid-table finish will be good news, a UEFA Cup qualification a triumph.

VENEZIA

Like Torino, Venezia are back in Serie A after a year in B and will also consider survival a case of mission accomplished. Experienced Mauro Bressan (Fiorentina), William Viali (Lecce) and Croat Mario Cvitanovic (Verona) have been bought for that purpose, and with the help of strikers Filippo Maniero and Arturo Di Napoli may prove good enough for the job. Coach Cesare Prandelli, brilliantly effective with Verona two seasons ago and architect of Venezia's promotion, is another reason for quiet optimism.

VERONA

Last-gasp winners of a desperately close relegation play-off with Reggina, Verona may have delayed their return to Serie B only by 12 months. The arrival of such as Marco Zanchi (Vicenza), Nicola Diliso (Cagliari) and Luca Matteassi (Brescello) would hardly seem to compensate the departures of Martin Laursen (Parma), Mario Cvitanovic (Venezia) and Emiliano Bonazzoli (Parma). Verona may, however, benefit from the experience of new coach and local hero Alberto Malesani, winner of UEFA and Italian Cups with Parma and brought in to replace Attilio Perotti.



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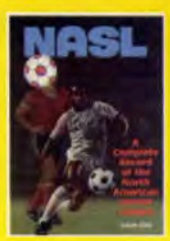

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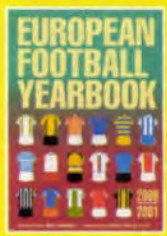

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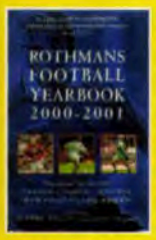

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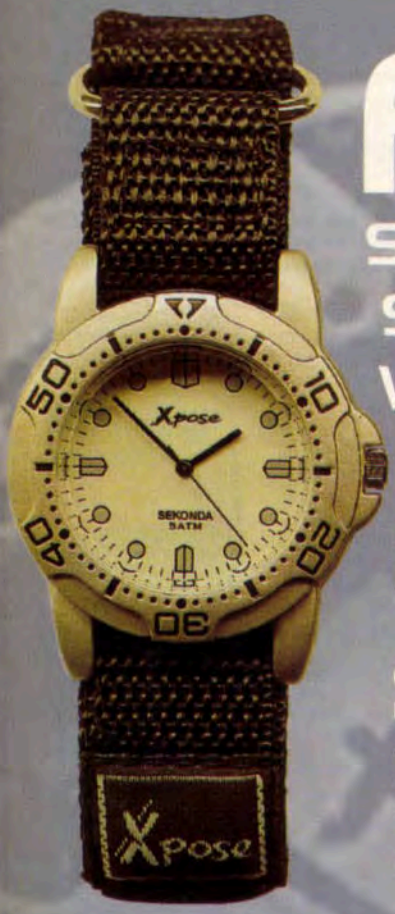

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June 23 - Hamilton - friendly
Bermuda 0
Trinidad & Tobago 5 (Yorke 23, N Pierre 44, Eve 63, S John 86, 90)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 3,000

Sunday, June 24

June 24 - Belize City - friendly
Belize 3 (Norberto 52, Esquivel 78, 82)
Cuba 2 (Hernandez 31, Gandara 39)
HT: 0-2

June 24 - Maseru - Cosafa CC quarter-final
Lesotho 1 (Ntsonyana 57)
Zambia 2 (Milanzi 18, Kampamba 48)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Musasa (Zim)
Lesotho: Thite - Maseela, Mahlakajoe, Hlojeng, Lehohla (Mosothoane 61), Seema, Pheko, Makhele, Potse (Shale 63), Mphongoa, Ntsonyana.
Zambia: Mbulo - Chilembe, Chisulo (Kachinga 67), Mwewa, Sinyangwe, Bakala, Lungu, Kampamba, Nsofwa, Lota (Chalwe 82), Milanzi. *Sent off: Chilembe 60mins.*

Thursday, June 28

June 28 - Tokyo - Kirin Cup
Paraguay 2 (J D Caceres 39, V Ferreira 83)
Yugoslavia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 21,213. **Ref:** Okada (Jap)
Paraguay: Chilavert - Isasi (Zelaya 86), J D Caceres, Caniza, Sanabria, Esteche (Espinola 73), Enciso, Morinigo (Amarilla 80), Robles (Cuevas 58), Gavilan, M Caceres (V Ferreira 58).
Yugoslavia: Kralj (S Stevanovic 46) - Dmitrovic (Zivkovic 65), Rasovic, Petkovic, Zoric, Cirkovic (Divic 46), Ognjanovic (M Dudic 46), Stojkovic (Krivokapic 28), Cakar, Trobok (Radenovic 82), Bogdanovic.

Friday, June 29

June 29 - Tripoli - WC qual
Libya 1 (Elharbi 35)
Angola 1 (Francisco 90)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 2,000. **Ref:** Bouchardeau
Libya: Maidan - Benashur (Milad 55), Rajab, Elaib, Akram, Ashref, Elharbi, Shebli (Eledrisi 74), Othman, Shaftar, Hamadi.
Angola: Lundala - Nzanza, Kutonda, Neto, Da Silva (Macaba 66), Alvez, Da Cruz, Amado (Francisco 82), Jeronimo, Campos, Joao.

Saturday, June 30

June 30 - Copenhagen - friendly
Greenland 4 (Geisler, Rex, Fleischer 2)
Tibet XI 1 (Lobo)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 5,100

June 30 - Rabat - WC qual
Morocco 1 (Hadji 32)
Egypt 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 45,000. **Ref:** Senai (Bot)
Morocco: Benzekri - Benmahmoud (Sellami 85), El Hadrioui, Ouaddou, Rossi, Naybet, Hadji (El Brazi 75), Hadda (Bassir 67), Ramzi, Kachloul, Amzine.
Egypt: N El Sayed - Emara, Ramzy, El Saka, R El Sayed, Ahmed Slah, Sabry (Abdel Aziz 80), T Said (M Slah 85), Barkat, A Hassan, Hossam.

June 30 - Windhoek - WC qual
Namibia 0
Algeria 4 (Settara 31, Ouahid 35, 37, Aouni 72)
HT: 0-3. **Att:** 900. **Ref:** Williams (SAf)
Namibia: Bruwer - R Gariseb, Ngarizemo, Van Wyk (Hindjou 46), Naruseb, Benjamin (Kauzuu 84), Jacobs, Mokoya, Goraseb (E Gariseb 46), Doeseb, Pienaar.
Algeria: Mezair - Haddou (Ghoul 72), Deghmani, Zeghdoud, Ouahid, Raho, Maouche, Kharkhacae (Aouni 62), Abbaci, Settara, Madoui (Boudyandji 72).

June 30 - Port-of-Spain - WC qual
Trinidad & Tobago 1 (S John 26)
Jamaica 2 (Lowe 30, Burton 68)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 4,000. **Ref:** Mendez (Uru)
Trinidad & Tobago: Ince - M Andrews, Elcock, A John (L Andrews 86), Carrington, Saunders, Trotman (Eve 57), S John, N Pierre, Rougier, Dwarika.
Jamaica: A Lawrence - Gardner, Marshall, Burton, Dixon, Goodison, Sinclair, Simpson, Powell (J Lawrence 43), Hyde, Lowe.

Sunday, July 1

July 1 - Ougadougou - WC qual
Burkina Faso 1 (Nana 73)
South Africa 1 (Zuma 24)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 22,770. **Ref:** Quartey (Gha)
Burkina Faso: Diarra - M Tall, Coulibaly, Korbeogo, Diabate, D Ouedraogo (Natama 63), Nana, Yameogo, Balbone (A Tall 46), O Traore, M Traore (A Ouedraogo 63).
South Africa: Vonk - Lekcetho, Rabutla, Booth, Fortune (Sheppard 79), August, Ngobe, Moshoeu (Mnguni 46), Zuma, Raselemane (Nomvete 46), Buckley.

July 1 - Yaounde - WC qual
Cameroon 2 (Eto'o 27, Foe 49)
Togo 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 40,000. **Ref:** Chukwujekwu (Nig)
Cameroon: Alioum - Song, Kalla, Dika Dika, Njitap, Eto'o, Mboma (N'Diefi 68), Epalle, Alnoudji, Foe (Suffo 62), Olembe (Tchato 81).
Togo: Agassa - Agoro, Atte-Oudeyi, Mamah, Noutsoudje, Salifou, Yedibahoma (Ganyo 59), Mohamed (S Maman 78), Tchedre (Kossi 68), Enifoul, Agbobli-Atayi.

July 1 - Tegucigalpa - WC qual
Honduras 2 (Guevara pen 25, 38)
Costa Rica 3 (Wanchope 9, Fonseca 13, Solis 83)
HT: 2-2. **Att:** 40,000
Honduras: Flores - S Caballero, Reyes, Clavasquin - Turcios, Guerrero, Jose Pineda, Guevara, Medina - D Suazo, Nunez (Carcamo 74).
Costa Rica: Lonnis - Parks, Wallace (Centeno 81), G Martinez, Drummond - Lopez, Solis, Cordero (Gomez 52), C Castro - Wanchope, Fonseca (Medford 74).

July 1 - Abidjan - WC qual
Ivory Coast 6 (Bakayoko 25, pen 40, 83, K Keita 48, Yapi Yapo 71, F Keita 80)
Madagascar 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Lim Kee Chong (Mrs)
Ivory Coast: Konate - Diabate, Kassou, Yapi Yapo (F Keita 74), Kone, Bakayoko, K Keita, Siby, Dindane (Ettien 54), Tiene (Traore 72), Domoraud.
Madagascar: Raharison - Radafison, Ralahajanahary (Kamardine 70), Rakotonbrabe, Randriamarozaka (Suiverstin 63), Rakotondndiaby (Andrianantonisolo 80), Robson, Randrianoelison, Razafindrakoto, Rakotondrandro, Ralison.

July 1 - Sapporo - Kirin Cup
Japan 2 (Yanagisawa 16, 50)
Paraguay 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 39,073. **Ref:** Hanlumyaung (Tha)
Japan: Kawaguchi - Matsuda, Morioka, K Nakata, Hato, Inamoto, Morishima (Fujimoto 89), Toda (Ito 87), Ono (Hattori 70), Yanagisawa (Yamashita 90), Suzuki (Nakayama 78).
Paraguay: Chilavert - Isasi (Escobar 73), J D Caceres, Sanabria (Amarilla 60), Zelaya, Caniza, Morinigo (Quintana 46), Ferreira, Enciso, Gavilan (Masi 83), M Caceres (Cuevas 55). *Sent off: Quintana 81mins.*

July 1 - Monrovia - WC qual
Liberia 1 (K Sebwe 44)
Ghana 2 (Amoah 32, Boakye 58)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Berber (Alg)
Liberia: Tokpah - Kojo, Kpoto, Menyongai (Wreh 63), K Sebwe, Seator (D Sebwe 48), Nagbe, Roberts, Prince Daye (Tondo 80), Makor, Weah.
Ghana: Nanor - I Owusu, Amoako, Y Owusu, Ablordey, I Mohamed (Arhin Duah 78), Amoah, Boakye, Owusu Ansah, E Duah (Asampong 73), H Mohamed.

July 1 - Mexico City - WC qual
Mexico 1 (Borgetti 15)
United States 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 115,000
Mexico: O Perez - Vidrio, Suarez, Brown - Torrado, T Campos, Garcia Aspe (Valdez 75), Arellano (J A Hernandez 86), Johan Rodriguez (Gutierrez 66), Borgetti, Palencia.
USA: Keller - Cherundolo, Llamosa, Agoos, Regis - Sanneh, Armas, Stewart, Moore (Jones 46) - Razov (Klein 82), Kirovski (McBride 61).

July 1 - Omdurman - WC qual
Sudan 0
Nigeria 4 (Okocha 40, Ayegbeni 47, 87, Aghahowa 78)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 23,100. **Ref:** Abdulkadir (Tan)
Sudan: Manofala - Samson, Aungali, Elkher, Kuku, Kolia, Karar (Mahadi 67), Moja (El Tahir 84), Sultan, El Mustafa, Bhakit (El Shikh 71).
Nigeria: Shorunmu - Yobo, Udeze, West, Finidi, Ayegbeni, Agali (N Kanu 70), Okocha, Ejiofor, Aghahowa, Ojigwe.

July 1 - Tunis - WC qual
Tunisia 6 (Badra pen 28, Zitouni 38, Baya 44, 61, Mhadbi 58, Jelassi 90)
Congo 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** Belqola (Mor)
Tunisia: Zoubai - Badra, Baya (Ghodbane 62), Mhadbi (Jelassi), Rouissi, Gabsi (Kanzari 62), Zitouni, Bouzegne, Bouazizi, Jaidi, Thabet.
Congo: O Itoua - Allelome, Tchimbakala, Nkeoua, E Itoua (Iwosso 78), Vieira, Makita-Passy, Lebally (Ngandziami 52), Mavoungou, Ndzi, Minga.

July 1 - Montevideo - WC qual
Uruguay 1 (Magallanes pen 32)
Brazil 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 62,000
Uruguay: Carini - Mendez, Montero, Sorondo, Guigou, Garcia, Romero, De los Santos, Recoba (Lembo 76), Silva (Reguero 62), Magallanes.
Brazil: Marcos - Cris, Antonio Carlos (Jardel 76), Roque Junior, Cafu, Roberto Carlos, Emerson Ferreira, Rivaldo, Juninho Paulista, Elber (Euller 60), Romario.

Tuesday, July 3

July 3 - Riga - Baltic Cup
Latvia 3 (Verpakovskis 41, Pahars 51, Kolesnicenko 90)
Estonia 1 (Zelinski 47)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 1,500. **Ref:** Mezelis (Lit)
Latvia: Piedels - Zakresevskis, Astafjevs, Zemlinskis, Lukasevics, Blagonadezdins, Stepanovs, Bleidelis (Pucinsks 78), Pahars (Kolesnicenko 80), Rubins, Verpakovskis (Stolcers 60).
Estonia: Kaalma - Allas, Stepanov, Piiroja, Saviauk (Rooba 64), Reim, Shets, Alonen, Zelinski, Kristal (Ustritski 81), Oper (Terehhov 78).

Wednesday, July 4

July 4 - Oita - Kirin Cup
Japan 1 (Inamoto 21)
Yugoslavia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 38,147. **Ref:** Rahman (Sin)
Japan: Kawaguchi - Matsuda (Miyamoto 68), Morioka (Ito 70), K Nakata, Inamoto, Morishima, Toda, Hato, Ono (Hattori 46), Yanagisawa (Nakayama 89), Suzuki (Kubo 77).
Yugoslavia: S Stevanovic (Ristovic 86) - Rasovic (Cakar 80), Ognjanovic, M Dudic, Petkovic (Cirkovic 86), Zoric, Trobok (Radenovic 73), Stojkovic, Divic, Bogdanovic (B Stevanovic 63), Zivkovic.

KIRIN CUP - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Japan	2	2	0	0	3	0	6
Paraguay	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Yugoslavia	2	0	0	2	0	3	0

July 4 - Riga - Baltic Cup
Lithuania 5 (Buitkus 37, Cesnauskis 46, Vasiliauskas 73, Trakys 90, Vileniskis 90)
Estonia 2 (Anniste 7, Svets 35)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 500. **Ref:** Lajuks (Lat)
Lithuania: V Zutautas - Stankevicius, D Zutautas, Dziaukstas, Joksas, Barasa (Sobolis 82), Maciulevicius (Ringys 68), Buitkus (Vasiliauskas 73), Cesnauskis (Trakys 77), Beniusis (Vileniskis 85), Varnas (Barevicius 46).
Estonia: Kiseliov - M Rooba, Stepanov (Piiroja 58; Saviauk 69), Rahn, U Rooba, Anniste, Svets (Kristal 68), Novikov, Ustritski (Zelinski 64), Kosemets (Aniupera 83), Terehhov.

Thursday, July 5

July 5 - Riga - Baltic Cup
Latvia 4 (Rubins 45, Pahars 52, Blagonadezdins 84, Kolesnicenko 89)
Lithuania 1 (Barasa 12)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 4,000. **Ref:** Kaldma (Est)
Latvia: Kolinko - Zakresevskis, Astafjevs, Zemlinskis, Lukasevics, Korablovs, Stepanovs, Bleidelis (Pucinsks 76), Pahars (Blagonadezdins 80), Rubins (Miholaps 85), Stolcers (Kolesnicenko 70).
Lithuania: V Zutautas - Stankevicius, D Zutautas, Dziaukstas, Joksas, Barasa, Maciulevicius, Buitkus (Barevicius 46), Cesnauskis (Vileniskis 46; Ringys 74), Beniusis, Varnas (Vasiliauskas 64).

BALTIC CUP - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Latvia	2	2	0	0	7	2	6
Lithuania	2	1	0	1	6	6	3
Estonia	2	0	0	2	3	8	0

Sunday, July 8

July 8 - Harare - Cosafa CC quarter-final
Zimbabwe 2 (Sibanda 26, Jukelile 56)
Swaziland 1 (Nhleko 72)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** De Sousa (Ang)
Zimbabwe: C Dube - J Matola, T Ncube, Gilbert, Mpofu, A Matola (Masuku 63), Zulu, Sibanda, Choruma (Makunike 80), Jukelile (Mushangazhike 72), P Ndlovu.
Swaziland: Magagula - Gamedze, Ngubane, Masangane, Sidell, D Dlamini, Masina (Nxumalo 63), Mdluli, S Dlamini (Nhlabatsi 76), Zikakala (Nhleko 37), Mkhwanazi.

Tuesday, July 10

July 10 - Singapore - friendly
Singapore 0
Saudi Arabia 3 (Al-Jaber 28, 37, O Al-Dossari 31)
HT: 0-3

Friday, July 13

July 13 - Alexandria - WC qual
Egypt 8 (T Said 5, Barkat 36, 73, Hamid 40, 43, 44, Salah 77, Sabry 88)
Namibia 2 (Kontawana 53, E Gariseb 46)
HT: 5-0. **Att:** 21,000. **Ref:** Abdalla (Lby)
Egypt: N El Sayed - Emara, Ramzy (I Said 64), El Saka, R El Sayed, Hamid, T Said (Salah 74), Barkat, Abdel Aziz, A Hassan, Hossam (Sabry 74).
Namibia: Bruwer - Kauzuu, R Gariseb (Nicodelis 46), Karheke, Naruseb, Schmist (E Gariseb 46), Pienaar, Ngarizemo, Hindjou, Kontawana (Kleister 89), Mbaisa.

Saturday, July 14

July 14 - Dakar - WC qual
Senegal 1 (El Hadji Diouf 17)
Morocco 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 60,000. **Ref:** Mathabela (SAf)
Senegal: Sylva - Daf, Amadou N'Diaye, Sarr, A Cisse, H Camara (Beye 88), El Hadji Diouf, Diatta, M N'Diaye, Diao (Papa Bouba Diop 77), Coly.
Morocco: Fouhami - Benmahmoud (Regragui 46), El Hadrioui, Ouaddou, Naybet, Hadji (Nader 76), Hadda (Bassir 67), Ramzi, Safri, Amzine, Chippo.

July 14 - Freetown - WC qual
Sierra Leone 0
Liberia 1 (Weah 72)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 40,000. **Ref:** Sowe (Gam)
Sierra Leone: M Sesay - Sama Pa, H Sesay (J Kargbo 79), K Kallon, K Conteh, Bah, M Kallon, I Kargbo (Brewah 41), A Kamara, E Koroma, Woobay.
Liberia: Tokpah - F Johnson, E Dixon, D Sebwe, K Sebwe, D Johnson, Nagbe, Roberts, Tondo (A Brown 25; Menyongai 81), Sarr (Weah 63), Gebro.

July 14 - Durban - WC qual
South Africa 2 (Booth 5, August 54)
Malawi 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 17,500. **Ref:** Maillet (Sey)
South Africa: Arendse - Booth, Sheppard (Khumalo 63), Rabutla, Kannemeyer, F McCarthy, August, T Mokoena (Ndzudo 63), Mnguni, Zuma, B McCarthy (Nhleko 81).
Malawi: Dzinkambani (Sanudi 27) - Msuku, Mabedi, Banda (Manda 87), Mponda, Chitsulo, Kanyenda, Mwase, Kafwafwa (Phiri 47), Yobe, Munthali.

July 14 - Lusaka - WC qual
Zambia 2 (Mwewa 60, Nsofwa 66)
Cameroon 2 (Foe 52, N'Diefi 64)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** El Beltagy (Egy)
Zambia: Mbulo - Chilembe, Bakala, Tana, Mwewa, D Lota (Kilambe 75), Milanzi, Lungu, Sinyangwe (Chisulo 90), Kampamba, Nsofwa.
Cameroon: Souleymanou - Tchato, Feutchine (Ndo 83), Dika Dika, Mbele, Njanka, Tchoutang (Suffo 64), Alnoudji, N'Diefi, Epalle (Tchuisse 62), Foe.

Sunday, July 15

July 15 - Pointe Noire - WC qual
Congo 1 (Bakouma pen 86)
Ivory Coast 1 (Coulibaly 82)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Tessema (Eth)
Congo: Endzoua - Kimbembe (Allelome 68), Elovlou, E Itoua, Tsoumou, Nkeoua, Ngandziami, Makita-Passy (Pourou 68), Bakouma, Minga, Ndzi (Iwosso 67).
Ivory Coast: Konate - Toure, Diabate (Kandia 79), Kassou, Guel, Kone, Bakayoko, K Keita (Dindane 61), Siby, Tiene, Ettien (Coulibaly 57).

July 15 - Kinshasa - WC qual
DR Congo 0
Tunisia 3 (Badra 14, Baya 50, 54)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Coulibaly (Mli)
DR Congo: Mayala - Bafwafwa, Kisombe Mundaba, Matondobi (Bukasa 58), Mukando, Mulekelayi, Tokala (Bongombe 58), Kanika, Mukunku, Kifu (Mungunu 74), Kayembe.
Tunisia: Zoubai - Badra, Baya, Boukadida, Jaziri, Gabsi, Zitouni (Mhadbi 89), Bouzegne (Marzauki 68), Bouazizi, Jaidi, Thabet (H Trabelsi 78).

July 15 - Accra - WC qual
Ghana 1 (E Kuffour 44)
Sudan 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 7,000. **Ref:** Bouchardeau (Nig)
Ghana: Nanor - I Owusu, E Kuffour (Asampong 86), Amoako, Y Owusu, Gargo, Amoah, Boakye (I Mohamed 73), Owusu Ansah (Ablordey 49), E Duah, H Mohamed.
Sudan: Manofala - Samson, Elkher, Karpous, Daoud, Moja (El Rasheed 59), Hassan Ali, Sultan (El Faki 78), El Mustafa (Aungali 87), Nasr, Bhakit.

July 15 - Lome - WC qual
Togo 2 (Kossi 26, 43)
Libya 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Diouf (Sen)
Togo: Agassa - Adebayor, Atte-Oudeyi, A G Maman, Salou, Kossi, Salifou, Akoto (Agbobli-Atayi 73), S Maman (Yerima 58), Enifoul, S Coubageat (Ganyo 63). *Sent off: Adebayor 76min.*
Libya: Maidan - Elbeskini, Bilal, Elaib, Omar, Feituri, Elharbi, Benhussein (Shebli 76), Shaftar, Hamadi, Eledrisi.

July 15 - Harare - WC qual
Zimbabwe 1 (Makunike 43)
Burkina Faso 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** A M Salih (Sud)
Zimbabwe: C Dube - J Matola, Nyandoro, T Ncube, Gilbert, Mpofu, M Dube, Komani (E Dube 75), Makunike, Masiku (Chazika 67), Sibanda.
Burkina Faso: Kontougomde - Kanoute, Coulibaly, Gorogo (Dissa 78), Konombo, Maiga (Ouoba 65), Nikiema, Korabou, Ouattara, O Ouedraogo, Pafadnam.

COPA AMERICA

In Colombia

Group A

July 11 - Barranquilla - Copa Am
Ecuador 1 (Chala 53)
Chile 4 (Navia 29, Montecinos 73, 90, Corrales 85)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 40,000. **Ref:** Ortube (Bol)
Ecuador: Ibarra - De la Cruz, I Hurtado, Espinoza, Guerron, Mendez (Obregon 46), Tenorio (Ordonez 84), A Aguinaga (Sanchez 64), Chala, Fernandez, Delgado. *Sent off: Chala 77min.*
Chile: S Vargas - Pozo, L Fuentes, P Reyes, R Rojas, Villarroel (Henriquez 79), Aros, Villaseca, Maldonado (Valenzuela 65), Navia (Corrales 73), Montecinos.

July 11 - Barranquilla - Copa Am
Colombia 2 (Grisales 15, Aristizabal pen 59)
Venezuela 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 60,000. **Ref:** Hidalgo (Per)
Colombia: O Cordoba - Gonzalez, I Cordoba, Yepes, Cortes, Restrepo (Becerra 78), Hernandez, Grisales, Aristizabal (Ferreira 78), Castillo (Arriaga 46).
Venezuela: Dudamel - Vallenilla, Rey, Alvarado, M Mea Vitali, Noriega (Jimenez 54), L Vera, Rondon (Casseres 79), Paez (G Perez 85), Rojas, Arango. *Sent off: Vallenilla 47min.*

July 14 - Barranquilla - Copa Am
Chile 1 (Montecinos 78)
Venezuela 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Alcala (Mex)
Chile: S Vargas - L Fuentes, P Reyes, R Rojas, Villarroel (Henriquez 28), Aros (Perez 46), Villaseca, Galdames, Osorio (Valenzuela 66), Navia, Montecinos.
Venezuela: Dudamel - Rey, Alvarado, M Mea Vitali, Martinez, Noriega (H Gonzalez 78), L Vera, Urdaneta (G Perez 72), Paez (Rondon 63), Vielma, Arango.

July 14 - Barranquilla - Copa Am
Colombia 1 (Aristizabal 29)
Ecuador 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Aquino (Par)
Colombia: O Cordoba - Yepes, I Cordoba, Gonzalez, Bedoya, Ramirez, Restrepo, Hernandez (Molina 74), Grisales, Murillo, Aristizabal (Arriaga 68).
Ecuador: Cevallos - I Hurtado, De la Cruz, Burbano, Guerron (Tenorio 46), A Aguinaga, Delgado, Fernandez, Espinoza, Obregon (Sanchez 46), Mendez. *Sent off: A Aguinaga 81min.*

July 17 - Barranquilla - Copa Am
Ecuador 4 (Delgado 19, 63, Fernandez 29, Mendez 60)
Venezuela 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** Hidalgo
Ecuador: Ibarra - I Hurtado, De la Cruz, Burbano, Guerron, Delgado, Fernandez, Chala (Obregon 78), Espinoza, Mendez, Sanchez (J Aguinaga 76).
Venezuela: Dudamel - Rey, Alvarado, M Mea Vitali (G Perez 74), Martinez, Noriega, L Vera, Urdaneta, Paez (Jimenez 69), Vielma, Arango (Rondon 46).

July 17 - Barranquilla - Copa Am
Colombia 2 (Aristizabal pen 10, Arriaga 90)
Chile 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Larrionda (Uru)
Colombia: Calero - Lopez, I Cordoba, Yepes, Bedoya, Vargas (Arriaga 67), Ramirez, Hernandez (Molina 73), Grisales, Aristizabal (Becerra 46), Murillo. *Sent off: Murillo 34min.*
Chile: S Vargas - Maldonado, P Reyes, R Rojas, Pozo, Perez, Villaseca, Galdames, Valenzuela (Neira 63), Navia (Corrales 46; Nunez 71), Montecinos. *Sent off: Galdames 34min.*

GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Colombia	3	3	0	0	5	0	9
Chile	3	2	0	1	5	3	6
Ecuador	3	1	0	2	5	5	3
Venezuela	3	0	0	3	0	7	0

Colombia and Chile qualified for quarter-finals

Group B

July 12 - Cali - Copa Am
Peru 3 (Lobaton 16, Pajuelo 57, Del Solar 72)
Paraguay 3 (V Ferreira 23, 64, Garay 90)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 32,000. **Ref:** Sanchez (Arg)
Peru: Ibanez - Jorge Soto (Uribe 68), Jose Soto, Salazar, Pajuelo, Hidalgo, Jayo, Del Solar, Tempone (Ascoy 68), Lobaton (Holsen 76), Muchotrigo. *Sent off: Del Solar 79min.*
Paraguay: Tavarelli - Isasi, J D Caceres, Caniza, Sanabria, Enciso, Robles (J Gonzalez 46), Struway (Amarilla 59), Morinigo (Garay 50), Alvarenga, V Ferreira. *Sent off: Caniza 57min.*

July 12 - Cali - Copa Am
Brazil 0
Mexico 1 (Borgetti 5)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 40,000. **Ref:** Ruiz (Col)
Brazil: Marcos - Alessandro (Juninho Pernambucano 63), Cris, Roque Junior, Roger, Fabio Rochembach, Emerson Ferreira, Alex, Juninho Paulista (Guilherme 46), Geovanni, Jardel (Denilson 46).
Mexico: O Perez - Vidrio, Arellano, Marquez, H Morales, Torrado, Garcia Aspe, Johan Rodriguez (Osorno 80), Zepeda (Mercado 80), Borgetti, R Morales.

July 15 - Cali - Copa Am
Brazil 2 (Guilherme 9, Denilson 85)
Peru 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Larrionda (Uru)
Brazil: Marcos - Belletti, Juan, Cris, Junior, Eduardo Costa, Emerson Ferreira (Juninho Pernambucano 58), Ewerthon, Alex (Juninho Paulista 62), Roque Junior, Guilherme (Denilson 70).
Peru: Ibanez - Jorge Soto, Jose Soto, Salazar, Pajuelo, Hidalgo, Jayo, L Hernandez (Zevallos 46), Garcia (Holsen 60), Muchotrigo, Lobaton (J Hernandez 69). *Sent off: Salazar 67min.*

July 15 - Cali - Copa Am
Paraguay 0
Mexico 0
Att: 40,000. **Ref:** Zambrano (Ecu)
Paraguay: Tavarelli - Isasi, J D Caceres, Sanabria, Struway (J Gonzalez 76), Robles (Amarilla 46), Alvarenga, V Ferreira, Escobar, Enciso, Garay (M Caceres 46).
Mexico: A Rodriguez - Vidrio, Marquez, Hierro, Valdez (R Morales 46), Mercado, Garcia Aspe, Victorino, Osorno (Juan P Rodriguez 51), De Nigris (Borgetti 64), A Martinez.

July 18 - Cali - Copa Am
Peru 1 (Holsen 48)
Mexico 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Ortube (Bol)
Peru: Ibanez - Zevallos (Garcia 46), Jose Soto, Hidalgo, Pajuelo, Jayo, Del Solar, Jorge Soto, Muchotrigo, Holsen (Ascoy 89), Lobaton (Tempone 63). *Sent off: Muchotrigo 62min.*
Mexico: O Sanchez - A Rodriguez, Vidrio, H Morales, R Morales, Torrado, Reyes (Mercado 46), Juan P Rodriguez (Zepeda 46), Arellano, Borgetti, Victorino (De Nigris 65). *Sent off: Borgetti 62min.*

July 18 - Cali - Copa Am
Brazil 3 (Alex 60, Belletti 84, Denilson 90)
Paraguay 1 (Alvarenga pen 11)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 40,000. **Ref:** Sanchez (Arg)
Brazil: Marcos - Belletti, Juan, Roque Junior, Cris, Junior, Eduardo Costa (Juninho Pernambucano 55), Emerson Ferreira, Alex (Fabio Rochembach 65), Ewerthon (Denilson 44), Guilherme. *Sent off: Roque Junior 58min.*
Paraguay: Tavarelli - Escobar, Sanabria, J D Caceres, Caniza, Morinigo, Enciso (Struway 57), Garay, Alvarenga, Masi (J Gonzalez 64), V Ferreira (Robles 75). *Sent off: Caniza 81min.*

GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brazil	3	2	0	1	5	2	6
Mexico	3	1	1	1	1	1	4
Peru	3	1	1	1	4	5	4
Paraguay	3	0	2	1	4	6	2

Brazil, Mexico and Peru qualified for quarter-finals

Group C

July 13 - Medellin - Copa Am
Bolivia 0
Uruguay 1 (Chevanton 64)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Navarro (Can)
Bolivia: Arias - Gatty Ribeiro, Jiguchi, Sandy, Raldes, Alvarez, Calustro, Baldivieso, L Gutierrez (L Paz 73), Botero, Coimbra (R Garcia 73).
Uruguay: Munua - Diaz, Sorondo, Bizera, Lima, Callejas, Perez, Martinez (Anchen 56), Lemos (Eguren 63), Chevanton (C Morales 79), R Morales.

July 13 - Medellin - Copa Am
Honduras 0
Costa Rica 1 (Wanchope 63)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Sanchez (Chl)
Honduras: Valladares - Reyes (Perez 23), Guity, Medina, Carcamo, Lagos, Turcios, Bernardez, Guevara, D Suazo (Brown 14), S Martinez (Rodriguez 64).
Costa Rica: Lonnis - Drummond, Marin, Parks, G Martinez, Centeno (Gomez 61), Solis, Bryce (Cordero 71), C Castro, Wanchope, Fonseca (Medford 61).

July 16 - Medellin - Copa Am
Uruguay 1 (C Morales 53)
Costa Rica 1 (Wanchope 28)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** Simon (Bra)
Uruguay: Munua - Diaz, Sorondo, Bizera, Callejas, Perez, Martinez (Anchen 51), Lemos (Eguren 58), C Morales (Gutierrez 88), Curbelo, R Morales.
Costa Rica: Lonnis - Drummond, Marin, Parks, G Martinez, Centeno, Solis, Medford (Fonseca 57), C Castro, Wanchope, Gomez (Bryce 76).

July 16 - Medellin - Copa Am
Honduras 2 (Guevara 53, 68)
Bolivia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Toro (Col)
Honduras: Medina - Carcamo, S Caballero, Garcia, Guity (Perez 29), Lagos (Bernardez 87), Turcios (Rodriguez 64), Guevara, Leon, S Martinez, Valladares.
Bolivia: Arias - Gatty Ribeiro, Jiguchi, Sandy, Alvarez, Raldes (L Gutierrez 46), Calustro, Baldivieso (Carballo 78), Botero, R Garcia, L Paz (Coimbra 66). *Sent off: Sandy 71min, Coimbra 81min.*

July 19 - Medellin - Copa Am
Bolivia 0
Costa Rica 4 (Wanchope 45, 71, Bryce 63, Fonseca 84)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Solorzano (Ven)
Bolivia: Arias - Gatty Ribeiro, Raldes, Jiguchi, Carballo, Colque (Alvarez 46), Justiniano, Baldivieso, Roger Suarez, L Gutierrez, Botero.
Costa Rica: Gonzalez - Drummond, Arias, Marin, Berry, Centeno, Wallace, Cordero, Gomez (Bryce 61), Fonseca, Wanchope (Solis 72).

July 19 - Medellin - Copa Am
Honduras 1 (Guevara 86)
Uruguay 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Zambrano (Ecu)
Honduras: Valladares - Medina, Carcamo, S Caballero, Rodriguez (Brown 86), Guity, Garcia, Guevara, Leon, Turcios, S Martinez.
Uruguay: Berbia - Diaz, Bizera, Martinez (Perez 70), Lemos (Anchen 82), C Morales, Curbelo, Eguren, Dadomo, Gutierrez, Guglielmone (R Morales 67). *Sent off: Bizera 52min, Eguren 80min.*

GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Costa Rica	3	2	1	0	6	1	7
Honduras	3	2	0	1	3	1	6
Uruguay	3	1	1	1	2	2	4
Bolivia	3	0	0	3	0	7	0

Costa Rica, Honduras and Uruguay qualified for quarter-finals

MERDEKA TOURNAMENT

In Malaysia

Group A

June 21 - Kuala Lumpur - Merdeka tnmt
Bosnia-Herzegovina 1 (Jambor og 63)
Slovakia 0
HT: 0-0

June 21 - Kuala Lumpur - Merdeka tnmt
Malaysia 2 (Malik 25, Gawing 52)
Bahrain 4 (Yusuf 3, H A Ahmed 70, 85, 90)
HT: 1-1

June 23 - Kuala Lumpur - Merdeka tnmt
Bosnia-Herzegovina 1 (Kulenovic 3)
Bahrain 0
HT: 1-0

June 23 - Kuala Lumpur - Merdeka tnmt
Malaysia 0
Slovakia 2 (Breska 13, 41)
HT: 0-2

June 25 - Kuala Lumpur - Merdeka tnmt
Bahrain 2 (Jamal 35, 66)
Slovakia 0
HT: 1-0

June 25 - Kuala Lumpur - Merdeka tnmt
Malaysia 2 (Suparman 70, Azhar 83)
Bosnia-Herzegovina 2 (Ahmad og 48, Mesanovic 74)
HT: 0-0

GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bosnia-Herz	3	2	1	0	4	2	7
Bahrain	3	2	0	1	6	3	6
Slovakia	3	1	0	2	2	3	3
Malaysia	3	0	1	2	4	8	1

Group B

June 22 - Kuala Lumpur - Merdeka tnmt
Uzbekistan 1 (Hamidullaev 69)
Thailand U-23 0
HT: 0-0

June 22 - Kuala Lumpur - Merdeka tnmt
Malaysia U-23 2 (Mahayuddin 46, Yusop 74)
India 1 (Alberto 85)
HT: 0-0

June 24 - Kuala Lumpur - Merdeka tnmt
Malaysia U-23 0
Uzbekistan 2 (Vlasichev 62, Seytkamalov 71)
HT: 0-0

June 24 - Kuala Lumpur - Merdeka tnmt
Thailand U-23 2 (Noyvach 17, Surasieng 71)
India 0
HT: 1-0

June 26 - Kuala Lumpur - Merdeka tnmt
Uzbekistan 2 (Hamidullaev 19, Berdiev 32)
India 1 (Vijayan 45)
HT: 2-1

June 26 - Kuala Lumpur - Merdeka tnmt
Malaysia U-23 2 (Jayaprakash 32, Rajan 84)
Thailand U-23 1 (Yongant 75)
HT: 1-0

GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Uzbekistan	3	3	0	0	5	1	9
Malaysia U-23	3	2	0	1	3	3	6
Thailand U-23	3	1	0	2	4	4	3
India	3	0	0	3	2	6	0

Semi-finals

June 28 - Kuala Lumpur - Merdeka tnmt
Uzbekistan 2 (Seytkamalov 89, 90)
Bahrain 0
HT: 0-0

June 28 - Kuala Lumpur - Merdeka tnmt
Bosnia-Herzegovina 2 (Huric 12, Kulenovic 19)
Malaysia U-23 0
HT: 2-0

FINAL

June 30 - Kuala Lumpur - Merdeka tnmt
Uzbekistan 2 (Koshelev 83, Hamidullaev 119)
Bosnia-Herzegovina 1 (Brasnic 90)
Aet. **HT:** 0-0. **90mins:** 1-1

WORLD YOUTH CUP

In Argentina

Group A

In Buenos Aires

June 17
Argentina 2 (Rodriguez 39, D'Alessandro 64)
Finland 0
HT: 1-0

Egypt 0
Jamaica 0

June 20
Jamaica 0
Finland 1 (Varymen 87)
HT: 0-0

Egypt 1 (El Yamany 4)
Argentina 7 (Saviola 7, pen 15, 43, Coloccini 19, Romagnoli 54, Rodriguez 65, Rosales 68)
HT: 1-4

June 23
Argentina 5 (Coloccini 3, Saviola 7, pen 86, Herrera 14, 38)
Jamaica 1 (Dawkins 78)
HT: 4-0

Finland 1 (Sjolund 74)
Egypt 2 (Hamza 10, Reyad 62)
HT: 0-1

GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Argentina	3	3	0	0	14	2	9
Egypt	3	1	1	1	3	8	4
Finland	3	1	0	2	2	4	3
Jamaica	3	0	1	2	1	6	1

Argentina and Egypt qualified

Group B

In Cordoba

June 17
Brazil 2 (Robert 9, 22)
Germany 0
HT: 2-0

Iraq 3 (Ridha 21, Tahir 33, Hanoosh 43)
Canada 0
HT: 3-0

June 20
Canada 0
Germany 4 (Auer 17, 67, 70, Preuss 83)
HT: 0-1

Iraq 1 (Ridha 81)
Brazil 6 (Fernando pen 8, Pinga 14, Robert 27, 70, Adriano 29, 45)
HT: 0-5

June 23
Brazil 2 (Adriano 21, Robert 65)
Canada 0
HT: 1-0

Germany 3 (Preuss 40, Zepek 60, Auer 65)
Iraq 1 (Lapaczinski og 37)
HT: 1-1

GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brazil	3	3	0	0	10	1	9
Germany	3	2	0	1	7	3	6
Iraq	3	1	0	2	5	9	3
Canada	3	0	0	3	0	9	0

Brazil and Germany qualified

Group C

In Mendoza

June 17
United States 0
China 1 (Qu Bo 50)
HT: 0-0

Chile 2 (Millar 38, Pardo 90)
Ukraine 4 (Bielik 14, 50, Gerasimenko 36, Valeev 78)
HT: 1-3

June 20
Ukraine 0
China 0

Chile 1 (Valdes 27)
United States 4 (Beasley 6, 39, Davis 68, Buddle 75)
HT: 1-2

June 23
United States 1 (Arena 39)
Ukraine 1 (Stoyan 89)
HT: 1-0

China 0
Chile 1 (Berrios 87)
HT: 0-0

GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ukraine	3	1	2	0	5	3	5
United States	3	1	1	1	5	3	4
China	3	1	1	1	1	1	4
Chile	3	1	0	2	4	8	3

Ukraine, United States and China qualified

Group D

In Rosario

June 18
Angola 0
Czech Republic 0

Japan 0
Australia 2 (Haneda og 59, Owens 69)
HT: 0-0

June 21
Australia 0
Czech Republic 3 (Musil 27, Jun 30, Macek 47)
HT: 0-2

Japan 1 (Yamase pen 61)
Angola 2 (Mendonca 9, Rascas 81)
HT: 0-1

June 24
Angola 1 (Mantorras 12)
Australia 1 (Owens 82)
HT: 1-0

Czech Republic 0
Japan 3 (Kazuyuki Morisaki 74, Yamase 80, Tahara 87)
HT: 0-0

GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Angola	3	1	2	0	3	2	5
Czech Republic	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Australia	3	1	1	1	3	4	4
Japan	3	1	0	2	4	4	3

Angola, Czech Republic and Australia qualified

Group E

In Salta

June 18
Ecuador 2 (Mina 25, Guagua 63)
Ethiopia 1 (Andargachw pen 4)
HT: 1-1

Holland 1 (Hersi 63)
Costa Rica 3 (Montero 38, Parks 48, 54)
HT: 0-1

June 21
Costa Rica 3 (Parks 8, 49, Scott 61)
Ethiopia 1 (Zewdu 90)
HT: 1-0

Holland 1 (Colin 21)
Ecuador 1 (Vargas 85)
HT: 1-0

June 24
Ecuador 0
Costa Rica 1 (Hernandez 85)
HT: 0-0

Ethiopia 2 (Zewdu 52, Andargachw 90)
Holland 3 (Kolk 22, Hersi 41, Huntelaar 78)
HT: 0-2

GROUP E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Costa Rica	3	3	0	0	7	2	9
Ecuador	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Holland	3	1	1	1	5	6	4
Ethiopia	3	0	0	3	4	8	0

Costa Rica, Ecuador and Holland qualified

Group F

In Mar del Plata

June 18
Ghana 2 (Essien 58, Boateng 63)
Paraguay 1 (Guzman 69)
HT: 0-0

Iran 0
France 5 (Bugnet 59, Mexes 62, Cisse 66, 87, 90)
HT: 0-0

June 21
France 2 (Bugnet 10, Cisse 48)
Paraguay 2 (Fretes 53, Devaca 72)
HT: 1-0

Iran 0
Ghana 1 (Boateng 11)
HT: 0-1

June 24
Ghana 0
France 0

Paraguay 2 (Gonzalez 72, Gimenez 89)
Iran 0
HT: 0-0

GROUP F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ghana	3	2	1	0	3	1	7
France	3	1	2	0	7	2	5
Paraguay	3	1	1	1	5	4	4
Iran	3	0	0	3	0	8	0

Ghana, France and Paraguay qualified

Second round

June 27 - Buenos Aires
United States 0
Egypt 2 (Reyad pen 76, El Yamany 88)
HT: 0-0

June 27 - Buenos Aires
Argentina 2 (Rodriguez 3, Dominguez 76)
China 1 (Qu Bo 54)
HT: 1-0

June 27 - Cordoba
France 3 (Cisse pen 34, 90, Mendy 41)
Germany 2 (Auer 19, Burkhardt 78)
HT: 2-1

June 27 - Cordoba
Brazil 4 (Adriano 27, 65, Kaka 52, Eduardo 73)
Australia 0
HT: 1-0

June 28 - Mendoza
Ukraine 1 (Bielik 90)
Paraguay 2 (Benitez 19, Gonzalez 43)
HT: 0-2

June 28 - Rosario
Angola 0
Holland 2 (Mustapha 51, Huntelaar 88)
HT: 0-0

June 28 - Salta
Costa Rica 1 (Scott 28)
Czech Republic 2 (Musil 20, Jun 71)
HT: 1-1

June 28 - Mar del Plata
Ghana 1 (Mensah 12)
Ecuador 0
HT: 1-0

Quarter-finals

July 1 - Buenos Aires
Argentina 3 (Saviola 4, pen 44, 84)
France 1 (Mexes 43)
HT: 2-1

July 1 - Cordoba
Ghana 2 (Ibrahim 79, Mensah 92 - golden goal)
Brazil 1 (Adriano 43)
HT: 0-1

July 1 - Mendoza
Czech Republic 0
Paraguay 1 (Salcedo 31)
HT: 0-1

July 1 - Rosario
Holland 1 (Van der Vaart 32)
Egypt 2 (Amin 46, El Yamany 66)
HT: 1-0

Semi-finals

July 4 - Cordoba
Egypt 0
Ghana 2 (Inusah 83, El Atrawy og 89)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 6,000

July 4 - Buenos Aires
Argentina 5 (Saviola 18, 24, Romagnoli 41, D'Alessandro 53, Herrera 70)
Paraguay 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 35,000

Third-place play-off

July 8 - Buenos Aires
Paraguay 0
Egypt 1 (El Yamany 64)
HT: 0-0

FINAL

July 8 - Buenos Aires
Argentina 3 (Colotto 6, Saviola 14, Rodriguez 73)
Ghana 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 32,000. **Ref:** Mejuto Gonzalez (Spa)

WORLD YOUTH CUP – SQUADS

ANGOLA

1 LAMA (G, Petro Atletico Luanda)
2 MANUEL (D, Cabinda)
3 NELSINHO (M, Inter Luanda)
4 KIKAS (D, Inter Luanda)
5 LUTUCUTA (D, Bravos do Maquis)
6 DEDAS (D, Primeiro Agosto)
7 CHINHO (M, Petro Atletico Luanda)
8 RIQUINHO (M, Petro Atletico Luanda)
9 RASCAS (F, Academica Coimbra, Por)
10 MANTORRAS (F, Alverca, Por)
11 GILBERTO (F, Petro Atletico Luanda)
12 CASTIGO (M, Boavista, Por)
13 VEMBA (D, Primeiro Agosto)
14 MENDONCA (F, Varzim, Por)
15 LOLO (F, Primeiro Agosto)
16 MATEUS (M, Sporting Lisbon, Por)
17 FOFANA (F, Benfica Luanda)
18 CAPOCO (G, Petro Atletico Huambo)

ARGENTINA

1 German LUX (G, River Plate)
2 Nicolas BURDISSO (D, Boca Juniors)
3 Julio ARCA (D, Sunderland, Eng)
4 Mauro CETTO (D, Rosario Central)
5 Nicolas MEDINA (M, Argentinos Juniors)
6 Fabricio COLOCCINI (D, San Lorenzo)
7 Javier SAVIOLA (F, River Plate)
8 Oscar AHUMADA (M, River Plate)
9 Esteban HERRERA (F, Boca Juniors)
10 Leandro ROMAGNOLI (M, San Lorenzo)
11 Maximiliano RODRIGUEZ (M, Newell's Old Boys)
12 Gerardo SELTZER (D, Argentina Juniors)
13 Diego COLOTTO (D, Estudiantes de La Plata)
14 Leonardo PONZIO (M, Newell's Old Boys)
15 Andres D'ALESSANDRO (M, River Plate)
16 Mauro ROSALES (F, Newell's Old Boys)
17 Alejandro DOMINGUEZ (F, Quilmes)
18 Wilfredo CABALLERO (G, Boca Juniors)

AUSTRALIA

1 Michael TURNBULL (G, Marconi)
2 Mark BYRNES (D, Parramatta Power)
3 Adrian MADASCHI (D, Atalanta, Ita)
4 Ljubo MILICEVIC (D, Perth Glory)
5 Patrick KISNORBO (D, South Melbourne)
6 Wayne SRHOJ (M, Brisbane Strikers)
7 Ahmad ELRICH (M, Parramatta Power)
8 Gregory OWENS (F, Sydney Olympic)
9 Joshua KENNEDY (F, Wolfsburg, Ger)
10 Nicholas CARLE (F, Sydney Olympic)
11 Scott McDONALD (F, Southampton, Eng)
12 Lucas PANTELIS (M, Adelaide City Force)
13 Gareth EDDS (D, Nottingham Forest, Eng)
14 Louis BRAIN (M, Adelaide City Force)
15 Luke WILKSHIRE (M, Middlesbrough, Eng)
16 Daniel VASILEVSKI (M, Melbourne Knights)
17 Kevork GULESSERIAN (F, Marconi)
18 Jess KEDWELL-VANSTRATTAN (G, Verona, Ita)
20 Jonathan McKAIN (D, Brisbane Strikers)

BRAZIL

1 RUBINHO (G, Corinthians)
2 MAICON (D, Cruzeiro)
3 EDU DRACENA (M, Guarani)
4 MARQUINHOS (D, Corinthians)
5 EDUARDO (M, Gremio)
6 ANDERSON (D, Flamengo)
7 PINGA (M, Torino, Ita)
8 FERNANDO (M, Juventude)
9 ADRIANO (F, Flamengo)
10 JULIO BATISTA (M, Sao Paulo)
11 ROBERT (F, Botafogo)
12 LEO (M, Vasco da Gama)
13 ANGELO (D, Corinthians)
14 LUIZAO (D, Cruzeiro)
15 JULIO SANTOS (D, Sao Paulo)
16 OLIVEIRA (F, Sao Paulo)
17 KAKA (M, Sao Paulo)
18 MARCIO (G, Sao Paulo)

CANADA

1 Pieter MEULEMAN (G, Wilfred Laurier Univ)
2 Bernard OUASSA (D, St Johns Univ, USA)
3 Terry DUNFIELD (M, Manchester City, Eng)
4 Victor OPPONG (D, Univ of Mobile, USA)
5 Miles O'CONNOR (M, No club)
6 Mike KLUKOWSKI (M, Lille, Fra)
7 Tam NSALIWA (M, Nurnberg, Ger)
8 Maycoll CANIZALEZ (M, Werder Bremen, Ger)
9 Wyn BELOTTE (F, Nantes, Fra)
10 Julian DEGUZMAN (M, Saarbrucken, Ger)
11 Gaspare BORSELLINO (F, Univ of Mobile, USA)
12 Justin THOMPSON (F, Fairfield Univ, USA)
13 Chris POZNIAK (D, Toronto Lynx)
14 Chris WILLIAMS (M, Univ of Mobile, USA)
15 Atiba HUTCHINSON (M, Woodbridge)
16 Rob FRIEND (F, Western Michigan Univ, USA)
17 Iain HUME (F, Tranmere Rovers, Eng)
18 Wojtek ZARZYCKI (G, Dartmouth Univ, USA)

CHILE

1 Johnny HERRERA (G, Universidad de Chile)
2 Sergio FERNANDEZ (D, Colo Colo)
3 Daniel CAMPOS (D, Deportes Concepcion)
4 Hugo DROGUETT (D, Universidad Catolica)
5 Luis OYARZUN (D, Palestino)
6 Nelson PINTO (D, Universidad de Chile)
7 Gonzalo VILLAGRA (M, Universidad Catolica)
8 Sebastian PARDO (M, Universidad de Chile)
9 Mario CACERES (F, Sporting Lisbon, Por)
10 Jaime VALDES (M, Bari, Ita)
11 Mario SALGADO (F, Huachipato)
12 Gino REYES (D, Colo Colo)
13 Joel SOTO (F, Santiago Wanderers)
14 Adan VERGARA (D, Cobreloa)
15 Mario BERRIOS (D, Palestino)
16 Roberto ORDENES (M, Union Espanola)
17 Rodrigo MILLAR (M, Huachipato)
18 Eduardo LOBOS (G, Colo Colo)

CHINA

1 AN Qi (G, Dalian Shide)
2 MA Yi (M, Shenyang Haishi)
3 DU Wei (D, Shanghai 02)
4 ZHOU Lin (D, Chongqing Lifan)
5 WANG Sheng (D, Dalian Shide)
6 HU Zhaojun (M, Dalian Shide)
7 SUN Ji (M, Shanghai 02)
8 GAO Ming (M, Qingdao Hainiu)
9 SUI Yong (F, Qingdao Hainiu)
10 YAN Song (F, Dalian Shide)
11 SUN Xiang (M, Shanghai 02)
12 LU FENG (F, Henan)
13 WANG Xinxin (M, Liaoning)
14 XU Liang (D, Liaoning)
15 ZHANG Yaokun (D, Dalian Shide)
16 QU Bo (F, Qingdao Hainiu)
17 YU Tao (F, Shanghai 02)
18 YANG Jun (G, Qingdao Hainiu)

COSTA RICA

1 Neighel DORMOND (G, Alajuelense)
2 Michael RODRIGUEZ (D, Ramonense)
3 Pablo SALAZAR (D, Alajuelense)
4 Christian MONTERO (D, Alajuelense)
5 Roy MYRIE (D, Cahuita)
6 Johel FAJARDO (D, Guanacaste)
7 Erick SCOTT (F, Alajuelense)
8 Jose Luis LOPEZ (M, Heredia)
9 Derman MOSS (F, Cahuita)
10 Warren GRANADOS (F, Ramonense)
11 Winston PARKS (F, Limonense)
12 Harold APU (D, Liberia)
13 Jonathan OROZCO (M, Saprissa)
14 Luis Daniel VALLEJOS (M, Heredia)
15 Alonso ALFARO (D, Heredia)
16 Carlos HERNANDEZ (M, Alajuelense)
17 Maichal ROBINSON (D, Alajuelense)
18 Daniel RODRIGUEZ (G, Heredia)
20 Randy ARAYA (M, CS Cartagines)

CZECH REPUBLIC

1 Patrik KOLAR (G, Sparta Prague)
2 Tomas HUBSCHMAN (D, Sparta Prague)
3 Patrik KRAP (M, Stavo Artikl Brno)
4 Tomas PESIR (F, Slavia Prague)
5 Petr SILNY (M, Slovan Liberec)
6 Martin LESTINA (D, Ceske Budejovice)
7 Vlastimil VIDLICKA (D, Slovan Liberec)
8 Radek SIRL (M, Bohemians Prague)
9 Michal MACEK (M, Pribram)
10 Jaroslav SEDIVEC (F, Viktoria Plzen)
11 Tomas GLOS (D, Sigma Olomouc)
12 David LAFATA (M, Ceske Budejovice)
13 Martin ZIVNY (M, Stavo Artikl Brno)
14 Jan POLAK (M, Stavo Artikl Brno)
15 Petr MUSIL (F, Stavo Artikl Brno)
16 Tomas JUN (F, Sparta Prague)
17 Pavel BESTA (D, Banik Ostrava)
18 Petr CECH (G, Sparta Prague)

ECUADOR

1 Omar ESTRADA (G, LDU Quito)
2 William CUERO (D, Barcelona)
3 Jorge GUAGUA (D, El Nacional)
4 Pool GAVILANEZ (D, Santa Rita)
5 Cristhian QUINONEZ (M, Barcelona)
6 Jorge VARGAS (D, LDU Quito)
7 Pedro ESTERILLA (M, Espoli)
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9 Estuardo QUINONEZ (F, Universidad Catolica, Chl)
10 Javier INTRIAGO (M, Santa Rita)
11 Franklin SALAS (F, LDU Quito)
12 Walter IZA (F, Aucas)
13 Edwin PINEDA (D, LDU Quito)
14 Segundo CASTILLO (M, Espoli)
15 Roberto MINA (M, Salesiano)
16 Franklin COROZO (D, Emelec)
17 Felix BORJA (F, El Nacional)
18 Daniel VITERI (G, Emelec)

EGYPT

1 Mohamed SOBHI (G, Ismaili)
2 Ahmed ABOU EL AMAYEM (D, El Mahlah)
3 ABOU EL MAGD (M, Al Ahly)
4 Hussein AMIN (D, Al Ahly)
5 Mahmoud MAHMOUD (D, Zamalek)
6 Mohamed EL ATRAWY (D, El Mahlah)
7 Mohamed SHAWKY (M, Al Masry)
8 Wael REYAD (M, Al Ahly)
9 Reda SHEHATA (M, Al Ahly)
10 Mohamed GERISHA (F, Ismaili)
11 Mohamed EL YAMANY (F, Standard Liege, Blg)
12 Mohamed ABDELWAHED (M, Al Tersana)
13 Azmy AMIR (D, Zamalek)
14 Hossam GHALI (M, Al Ahly)
15 Ahmed ABOU MOSLEM (M, Al Ahly)
16 Gamal HAMZA (F, Zamalek)
17 Gamal HAWASH (M, Dina)
18 Ismail Zinga WAIL (G, Zamalek)

ETHIOPIA

1 Adugna DEYES (G, EEPCO)
2 Belay FEKADU (M, St George)
3 Molla ERMIAS (D, BSPP)
4 Bekele ZEWDU (D, Awassa City)
5 Gebremichael YONAS (D, EEPCO)
6 Tesfaye KEFYALEW (D, St George)
7 Teshome GETU (M, Banks)
8 Girma ASHENAFI (M, Ethiopian Coffee)
9 Abay YORDANOS (F, EEPCO)
10 Mengistu GETAHUN (F, Insurance Addis)
11 Seman HUSSEN (F, Ethiopian Coffee)
12 Abubakar ISMAEL (M, St George)
13 Muleta BERIHANU (M, Tsehay Gebat)
14 Admassu HAILU (M, EEPCO)
15 Elihu BEKELE (D, Nyala)
16 Mebratu DAWIT (M, Airlines)
17 Solomon ANDARGACHW (M, Ethiopian Coffee)
18 Getachew SOLOMON (G, Insurance Addis)

FINLAND

1 Otto FREDRIKSON (G, Tervarit)
2 Harri HAAPANIEMI (D, Atlantis)
3 Ossi MARTIKAINEN (D, HJK Helsinki)
4 Tomas AHO (D, Myllykosken Pallo-47)
5 Marco PARNELA (D, Thun, Swi)
6 Mika NISKALA (M, Norrkoping, Swe)
7 Hannu HAARALA (M, HJK Helsinki)
8 Antti OKKONEN (M, Myllykosken Pallo-47)
9 Mika VAYRYNEN (F, Jokerit)
10 Mikael FORSSELL (F, Chelsea, Eng)
11 Daniel SJOLUND (F, Liverpool, Eng)
12 Jussi PETERI (M, HJK Helsinki)
13 Juha LUOMA (D, Jazz)
14 Jukka SAUSO (D, Vaasa Palloseura)
15 Teemu LAMPINEN (M, Lahti)
16 Kristian KUNNAS (M, HJK Helsinki)
17 Matti SANTAHUHTA (F, Jazz)
18 Tatu NISKANEN (G, KuPS)

FRANCE

1 Nicolas PENNETEAU (G, Bastia)
2 Mathieu DELPIERRE (D, Lille)
3 Gregory VIGNAL (D, Liverpool, Eng)
4 Gael GIVET (D, Monaco)
5 Philippe MEXES (D, Auxerre)
6 Pascal BERENGUER (M, Bastia)
7 Benoit CHEYROU (M, Lille)
8 Nicolas FABIANO (M, Swansea City, Wal)
9 Alou DIARRA (M, Bayern Munich, Ger)
10 Mathieu MATON (F, Lille)
11 Hassan AHAMADA (F, Nantes)
12 Djibril CISSE (F, Auxerre)
13 Gael DANIC (M, Rennes)
14 Jonathan JOSEPH-AUGUSTIN (D, Guingamp)
15 Bernard MENDY (D, Paris Saint-Germain)
16 Sebastien ROUDET (M, Chateauroux)
17 Herve BUGNET (F, Bordeaux)
18 Nicolas PUYDEBOIS (G, Lyon)
19 Jean Felix DOROTHEE (D, Rennes)

GERMANY

1 Tom STARKE (G, Bayer Leverkusen)
2 Christoph PREUSS (D, Eintracht Frankfurt)
3 Christian FICKERT (D, Waldhof Mannheim)
4 Denis LAPACZINSKI (D, Hertha Berlin)
5 Michael ZEPEK (D, Bayer Leverkusen)
6 Giuseppe GEMITI (M, Eintracht Frankfurt)
7 Huzeyfe DOGAN (F, Bayer Leverkusen)
8 Hanno BALITSCH (M, Koln)
9 Benjamin AUER (F, Borussia Monchengladbach)
10 Selim TEBER (M, Waldhof Mannheim)
11 Thorsten BURKHARDT (F, Bayer Leverkusen)
12 Christian MIKOLAJCZAK (M, Schalke)
13 Jermaine JONES (F, Eintracht Frankfurt)
14 Christian TIFFERT (F, Stuttgart)
15 Stephan KLING (D, Bayern Munich)
16 Andreas HINKEL (D, Stuttgart)
17 Lars JUNGNICKEL (F, Energie Cottbus)
18 Jan SCHLOSSER (G, Bayern Munich)

GHANA

1 Maxwell BANAHENE (G, Hasaacas)
2 Sulley MUNTARI (M, Liberty)
3 Abass INUSAH (D, Real Sportive)
4 Michael ESSIEN (D, Bastia, Fra)
5 Patrick VILLARS (D, Dwarfs)
6 Emmanuel PAPPOE (D, Liberty)
7 Samuel THOMPSON (F, Top Allies)
8 Abdul IBRAHIM (M, Empoli, Ita)
9 Razak PIMPONG (F, Midtjylland, Den)
10 Derek BOATENG (F, Panathinaikos, Gre)

11 Frank OSEI (D, King Faisal)
12 Yussif ISSAH (D, Hasaacas)
13 Anthony OBODAI (F, Ajax, Hol)
14 John MENSAH (D, Bellinzona, Swi)
15 John PANTSIL (F, Berekum Arsenal)
16 Kwaku DUAH (M, Asante Kotoko)
17 James OWUSU-ANSAH (M, Cruz Azul, Mex)
18 George OWU (G, Hasaacas)

HOLLAND

1 Maarten STEKELENBURG (G, Ajax)
2 Jurgan COLIN (D, PSV Eindhoven)
3 Rene VAN DIEREN (M, Feyenoord)
4 John HEITINGA (D, Ajax)
5 Jeffrey LEIWAKABESSY (D, NEC Nijmegen)
6 Davide MENDES (M, Sparta Rotterdam)
7 Rahamat MUSTAPHA (F, Vitesse Arnhem)
8 Rafael VAN DER VAART (M, Ajax)
9 Klaas HUNTELAAR (F, PSV Eindhoven)
10 Youssouf HERSI (M, Ajax)
11 Arjen ROBBEN (F, Groningen)
12 Civard SPROCKEL (D, Feyenoord)
13 Said BOUTAHAR (M, Feyenoord)
14 Theo JANSSEN (M, Vitesse Arnhem)
15 Thijs HOUWING (F, Twente Enschede)
16 Gregoor VAN DIJK (M, Groningen)
17 Santi KOLK (F, Heerenveen)
18 Gino COUTINHO (G, PSV Eindhoven)

IRAN

1 Arshad YOSEFI (G, Abu Moslem)
2 Amir FALAHI (D, Paykan)
3 Mahmoudreza ASHOURI (D, Esteghlal Rasht)
4 Saeid LOTFI (D, Paykan)
5 Mostafa SALEHINEJAD (M, Zobe Ahan)
6 Alireza MONAGATI (D, Shahin)
7 Alireza DAGHAGHLEH (M, Fulad Khosestan)
8 Bahram ESMAEILI (F, Fajr Sepasi)
9 Eman MOBALI (M, Fulad Khosestan)
10 Mansour JAMALYAN (F, Payem Paykan)
11 Reza HADADI (F, Teraktor Sazi)
12 Mohammad OSTOVARI (M, Fajr Sepasi)
13 Samad ZARE (D, Zobe Ahan)
14 Morteza KASHI (D, Pass)
15 Mehrzad MADANCHI (M, Fajr Sepasi)
16 Mostafa HAGHI POUR (M, Pass)
17 Javad KAZEMEYAN (F, Saipa)
18 Abbas GHASEMI (G, Saipa)

IRAQ

1 Ahmad JABOR (G, Al Zawra)
2 Jassim KILAM (D, Army FC)
3 Hawar MOHAMMED (F, Air Force)
4 Haidar HASSAN (D, No club)
5 Munaim IBRAHIM (D, Police FC)
6 Sameeh AMIR (M, Air Force)
7 Emad RIDHA (M, Al Zawra)
8 Nashaat ALI (M, Police FC)
9 Ahmad ABBAS (F, Police FC)
10 Ammar HANOOSH (F, Al Zawra)
12 Haidar HASSAN (M, No club)
13 Basim KHUDAIR (M, No club)
14 Emad MAHODER (D, Al Mina)
15 Hassan ATEA (M, No club)
16 Mohannad SHITACH (M, Al Zawra)
17 Salah Aldeen TAHIR (D, Arbil)
18 Noar ABBAS (G, Al Zawra)
19 Arkan SHAMOUN (F, No club)

JAMAICA

1 Allien WHITTAKER (G, Hazard)
2 Sheldon BATTISTE (D, Hazard)
3 Shavar THOMAS (D, Hazard)
4 Fabian BLAKE (M, Reno)
5 Shane STEVENS (D, Arnett Gardens)
6 Alex THOMAS (D, Loomis Chaffee, USA)
7 Sean FRASER (M, Harbour View)
8 Keith KELLY (M, Paris Saint-Germain, Fra)
9 Omar DALEY (M, Hazard)
10 Fabian DAWKINS (M, Village United)
11 Christopher NICHOLAS (F, Tivoli Gardens)
12 Craig GORDON (F, Reno)
13 Adam WALLACE (F, No club)
14 Kevon HARRIS (D, Santos FC)
15 Wolry WOLFE (D, Hazard)
16 Khari STEPHENSON (M, Williams College, USA)
17 Damion WILLIAMS (M, Water House)
18 Allan REID (G, Boys Town)

JAPAN

1 Yosuke FUJIGAYA (G, Consadole Sapporo)
2 Shohei IKEDA (D, Shimizu S-Pulse)
3 Sota NAKAZAWA (D, Kashiwa Reysol)
5 Kenji HANEDA (D, Kashima Antlers)
6 Yuichi KOMANO (D, Sanfrecce Hiroshima)
7 Takeshi AOKI (M, Kashima Antlers)
8 Kazuyuki MORISAKI (M, Sanfrecce Hiroshima)
9 Yutaka TAHARA (F, Yokohama F Marinos)
10 Naohiro ISHIKAWA (M, Yokohama F Marinos)
11 Hisato SATO (F, JEF United Ichihara)
12 Shunta NAGAI (M, Kashiwa Reysol)
13 Koji YAMASE (M, Consadole Sapporo)
14 Ryoichi MAEDA (F, Jubilo Iwata)
15 Kazuki HIRAMOTO (F, Tokyo Verdy 1969)
16 Koji MORISAKI (M, Sanfrecce Hiroshima)
17 Kazunori IIO (F, Tokyo Verdy 1969)
18 Takaya KUROKAWA (G, Shimizu S-Pulse)
19 Daisuke NASU (D, Komazawa Univ)

PARAGUAY

1 Diego BARRETO (G, Cerro Porteno)
2 David VILLALBA (D, Olimpia)
3 Jose DEVACA (D, Udinese, Ita)
4 Emilio MARTINEZ (D, Cerro Porteno)
5 Pedro BENITEZ (D, Sportivo Luqueno)
6 Walter FRETES (M, Cerro Porteno)
7 Alejandro DA SILVA (F, Udinese, Ita)
8 Jorge BRITEZ (M, Sporting Braga, Por)
9 Julio GONZALEZ (F, Guarani)
10 Tomas GUZMAN (M, Juventus, Ita)
11 Santiago SALCEDO (M, Cerro Porteno)
12 Celso ESQUIVEL (D, San Lorenzo, Arg)
13 Gabriel ESTIGARRIBIA (D, Atletico Colegiales)
14 Felipe GIMENEZ (M, Olimpia)
15 Osvaldo DIAZ (M, Guarani)
16 Fredy BAREIRO (F, 12 de Octubre)
17 Cristian FATECHA (F, Sportivo Luqueno)
18 Eduardo CACERES (G, Sportivo Luqueno)
19 Diego DEL PUERTO (M, Sportivo San Lorenzo)
20 Anival SOSA (F, Sol de America)

UKRAINE

1 Artem KUSLII (G, Dnipro Dnipropetrovsk)
2 Roman PASSICHNICHENKO (D, Dnipro Dnipropetrovsk)
3 Bogdan SHERSHUN (D, Dnipro Dnipropetrovsk)
4 Sergi SYMONENKO (D, Torpedo Moscow, Rus)
5 Vitaliy KOMARNITSKYY (M, Ironi Rishon, Isr)
6 Denis STOYAN (M, Borisfen Borispol)
7 Volodymyr BONDARENKO (M, CSKA Kyiv)
8 Andriy SMALKO (M, Borisfen Borispol)
9 Olekcii BIELIK (F, Shakhtar Donetsk)
10 Ruslan VALEEV (F, De Graafschap, Hol)
11 Andrii GERASIMENKO (F, Kyiv Dynamo)
12 Taras KABANOV (F, Karpaty Lviv)
13 Fedir PROKHOROV (D, Dnipro Dnipropetrovsk)
14 Sergiy KHISTYEV (D, Stal Alchevsk)
15 Serhiy DANYLOVSKYY (D, Karpaty Lviv)
16 Mykola NAKONECHNYI (M, Borisfen Borispol)
17 Olexiy GAY (M, Shakhtar Donetsk)
18 Vitaliy RUDENKO (G, Chornomorets Odesa)

UNITED STATES

1 DJ COUNTESS (G, UCLA)
2 Philip SALYER (D, Univ Maryland)
3 Gooch ONYEWU (D, Clemson Univ)
4 Nelson AKWARI (D, UCLA)
5 Alex YI (D, UCLA)
6 Kelly GRAY (M, Univ Portland)
7 DaMarcus BEASLEY (M, Chicago Fire)
8 Alecko ESKANDARIAN (F, Univ Virginia)
9 Brad DAVIS (M, Univ St Louis)
10 Landon DONOVAN (F, San Jose Earthquakes)
11 Bobby CONVEY (M, DC United)
12 Ricky LEWIS (D, Clemson Univ)
13 Kyle MARTINO (M, Univ Virginia)
14 Kenny ARENA (M, Univ Virginia)
15 Brian CARROLL (M, Wake Forest Univ)
16 Conor CASEY (F, Borussia Dortmund, Ger)
17 Edson BUDDLE (F, Columbus Crew)
18 Doug WARREN (G, Clemson Univ)

EUROPEAN UNDER-21 CHAMPIONSHIP

The year to date

Group 1

March 23: (Novi Sad) Yugoslavia 3 (Bojan Brnovic 33, Delibasic 64, 74) Switzerland 3 (Remo Meyer 23, Greco 56, 69).
March 24: (Moscow) Russia 0 Slovenia 0.
March 27: (Dragovgrad) Slovenia 1 (Koren 86) Yugoslavia 2 (Bojan Brnovic 21, 82). (Muri) Switzerland 6 (Cabanas 14, 45, 89, Greco 18, Gygax 24, Zanni 35) Luxembourg 0.
April 25: (Belgrade) Yugoslavia 2 (Markovic 19, Dudic 83) Russia 2 (Gogniev 50, 76).
June 1: (Ljubljana) Slovenia 1 (Sukalo 72) Luxembourg 0.
June 2: (Moscow) Russia 2 (Koussov 10, Bystrov 90) Yugoslavia 0.
June 5: (Solothurn) Switzerland 2 (Gygax 28, 53) Slovenia 1 (Pekic 83).
June 6: (Petange) Luxembourg 0 Russia 10 (Bystrov 6, 15, 89, Gogniev 17, 41, Pimenov 27, 35, 64, Kuzmin 44, Izmailov 75).

GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Russia	6	3	2	1	17	5	11
Switzerland	5	3	2	0	14	5	11
Slovenia	6	2	2	2	8	5	8
Yugoslavia	5	2	2	1	10	8	8
Luxembourg	6	0	0	6	1	27	0

Aug 31: Switzerland v Yugoslavia
Sep 1: Slovenia v Russia
Sep 4: Luxembourg v Switzerland
Sep 4: Yugoslavia v Slovenia
Oct 5: Russia v Switzerland
Oct 5: Yugoslavia v Luxembourg

Group 2

March 23: (Larnaca) Cyprus 0 Rep Ireland 1 (O'Brien 19).
March 27: (Paphos) Cyprus 3 (Kavazis 10, Voskaridis 17, Christou 62) Estonia 1 (Kosemets 6). (Felgueiras) Portugal 3 (Monteiro 49, Costa Cardoso 61, 90) Holland 0.
April 24: (Doetinchem) Holland 4 (Kuyt 8, Van der Gun 35, Knol 58, Van der Meyde 73) Cyprus 2 (Garpozis 45, 72).
June 1: (Tallinn) Estonia 0 Holland 5 (Kuyt 27, Redan 46, 56, 74, Wisgerhof 73). (Dublin): Rep Ireland 0 Portugal 1 (Sabrosa Fonseca 35).
June 5: (Tallinn) Estonia 0 Rep Ireland 3 (Barrett 8, 58, Goodwin 88). (Abrantes) Portugal 7 (Sabrosa Fonseca 2, 45, Monteiro 18, 42, Sampson og 27, Costa Cardoso 39, Pinho Sousa 77) Cyprus 0.

GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Portugal	6	5	1	0	18	3	16
Holland	6	4	1	1	13	6	13
Rep Ireland	6	3	0	3	6	6	9
Cyprus	5	1	0	4	5	14	3
Estonia	5	0	0	5	2	15	0

Aug 14: Estonia v Cyprus
Aug 31: Ireland v Netherlands
Sep 4: Cyprus v Portugal
Sep 4: Netherlands v Estonia
Oct 5: Portugal v Estonia
Oct 5: Ireland v Cyprus

Group 3

March 23: (Vratsa) Bulgaria 1 (Rusev 14) Iceland 0. (Paola) Malta 0 Denmark 0. (Ballymena) Northern Irelamd 0 Czech Republic 2 (Baros 47, Pospisil 87).
March 27: (Vratsa) Bulgaria 2 (Genchev 4, Yanev 27) Northern Ireland 0. (Teplice) Czech Republic 3 (Vachousek 5, Baros 38, 58) Denmark 0.
April 24: (Gozo) Malta 1 (Camenzuli 70) Iceland 1 (Danielsson 5).
June 1: (Reykjavik) Iceland 3 (Gunnarsson 81, Gudjonsson 87, Oskarsson 89) Malta 0. (Odense) Denmark 3 (Lovenkrands 3, Skoubo 7, Albrechtsen 84) Czech Republic 4 (Sennels og 12, Vorisek 39, Vachousek 67, Zurek 90). (Belfast) Northern Ireland 1 (Carlisle 3) Bulgaria 1 (Bukarev 5).
June 5: (Odense) Denmark 3 (Lovenkrands 6, Larsen 81, Andreasen 86) Malta 0. (Akranes) Iceland 3 (Gudjohnsen 40, Baldvinsson 50, Adalsteinsson 68) Bulgaria 2 (Dimitrov 54, Sakaliev 90). (Prague) Czech Republic 4 (Kauffman 23, 48, Kobylik 54, Vachousek 59) Northern Ireland 0.

GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Czech Republic	7	6	0	1	16	5	18
Bulgaria	7	4	2	1	11	6	14
Denmark	7	2	3	2	11	9	9
Iceland	7	2	2	3	10	11	8
Northern Ireland	7	2	1	4	9	14	7
Malta	7	0	2	5	1	13	2

Aug 31: Malta v Bulgaria
Aug 31: Iceland v Czech Republic
Aug 31: Denmark v Northern Ireland
Sep 4: Bulgaria v Denmark
Sep 4: Czech Republic v Malta
Sep 4: Northern Ireland v Iceland
Oct 5: Czech Republic v Bulgaria
Oct 5: Malta v Northern Ireland
Oct 5: Denmark v Iceland

Group 4

March 23: (Boras) Sweden 2 (Ibrahimovic 34, Farnerud 42) Macedonia 0. (Bursa) Turkey 0 Slovakia 1 (Borbely 39).
March 24: (Sumgayit) Azerbaijan 0 Moldova 0.
March 27: (Kocani) Macedonia 1 (Pandev 70) Turkey 4 (Seven 25, Cimsir 37, Goktan 42, 55). (Trencin) Slovakia 5 (Sedlak 3, Hanek 46, Vittek 56, Krejci 63, Bednar 88) Azerbaijan 0.
March 28: (Speia) Moldova 0 Sweden 2 (Ibrahimovic 71, Farnerud 78).
June 1: (Enkoping) Sweden 4 (Ibrahimovic 48, Kallstrom 73, Farnerud 84, 88) Slovakia 0. (Istanbul) Turkey 3 (Goktan 11, 40, Akin 33) Azerbaijan 0.
June 2: (Skopje) Macedonia 2 (Ignatov 1, Dosevski 62) Moldova 0.
June 5: (Sumgayit) Azerbaijan 0 Slovakia 0. (Mjornvallen) Sweden 3 (Elmander 12, Ibrahimovic 36, Farnerud 84) Moldova 0. (Izmit) Turkey 2 (Goktan 51, Akin 54) Macedonia 0.

GROUP 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sweden	7	5	2	0	17	1	17
Turkey	7	5	1	1	12	3	16
Slovakia	7	4	2	1	12	5	14
Azerbaijan	7	1	2	4	3	16	5
Moldova	7	1	1	5	3	11	4
Macedonia	7	1	0	6	4	15	3

Aug 31: Macedonia v Sweden
Aug 31: Moldova v Azerbaijan
Aug 31: Slovakia v Turkey
Sep 4: Azerbaijan v Macedonia
Sep 4: Slovakia v Moldova
Sep 4: Turkey v Sweden
Oct 6: Macedonia v Slovakia
Oct 6: Moldova v Turkey
Oct 6: Sweden v Azerbaijan

Group 5

March 23: (Abovyan) Armenia 1 (Hakobyan 82) Wales 0. (Kyiv) Ukraine 1 (Monarev 29) Belarus 0.
March 24: (Stavanger) Norway 1 (Valencia 30) Poland 2 (Smolarek 69, Rasiak 75).
March 27: (Borisov) Belarus 1 (Kutusav 75) Norway 0. (Ostroleka) Poland 1 (Smolarek 42) Armenia 1 (Hakobyan 50). (Swansea) Wales 0 Ukraine 3 (Monarev 11, 20, Zapoyasko 16).
June 1: (Abovyan) Armenia 1 (Sergey Erzrumyan 55) Belarus 0. (Kyiv) Ukraine 1 (Oleksilenko 13) Norway 3 (Sogard 6,George 33, 51). (Merthyr Tydfil) Wales 0 Poland 4 (Smolarek 16, 52, Gorawski 34, 56).
June 5: (Abovyan) Armenia 2 (Aleksanyan 56, Hakobyan 67) Poland 0. (Kyiv) Ukraine 1 (Malokutso 56) Wales 0. (Drammen) Norway 5 (Kah 11, Hoff 36, Valencia 51, George 76, Riise 90) Belarus 1 (Gleb 66).

GROUP 5

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Norway	7	5	0	2	19	7	15
Ukraine	7	4	1	2	11	9	13
Belarus	7	4	0	3	15	8	12
Poland	7	3	2	2	11	11	11
Armenia	7	3	1	3	7	13	10
Wales	7	0	0	7	2	17	0

Aug 31: Belarus v Ukraine
Aug 31: Poland v Norway

Aug 31: Wales v Armenia
Sept 4: Belarus v Poland
Sept 4: Norway v Wales
Sept 4: Ukraine v Armenia
Oct 5: Armenia v Norway
Oct 5: Poland v Ukraine
Oct 5: Wales v Belarus

Group 6

March 23: (Vinkovci) Croatia 2 (Olic 19, Deranja 34) Latvia 1 (Karlsons 85). (Dunfermline) Scotland 0 Belgium 1 (Theunis 2).
June 1: (Antwerp) Belgium 3 (Dufer 26, Theunis 49, Imschoot 89) Latvia 0.
June 5: (Riga) Latvia 1 (Bezzubovs 88) Croatia 1 (Mikic 53).

GROUP 6

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Belgium	4	4	0	0	8	1	12
Croatia	4	2	1	1	7	5	7
Scotland	3	1	0	2	4	5	3
Latvia	5	0	1	4	3	11	1

Aug 31: Scotland v Croatia
Sep 4: Belgium v Scotland
Oct 5: Croatia v Belgium
Oct 5: Scotland v Latvia

Group 7

February 28: (Tel Aviv) Israel 3 (Katan 16, 51, Saban 24) France 4 (Sorlin 4, Kapo Obou 30, 81, Luyindula 84).
March 23: (Zenica) Bosnia 0 Austria 0.
March 25: (Villarreal) Spain 1 (Xavi 38) France (Govou 80).
March 27: (Vienna) Austria 0 Israel 2 (Zandberg 15, Sarfaty 48).
April 24: (Ried) Austria 1 (Kapo Obou og 75) France 1 (Luyindula 42).
June 1: (Ponterrada) Spain 5 (Gonzalez Counago 15, 73, 75, Aganzo 78, Guayre 80) Bosnia 1 (Simic 50).
June 5: (Rishon Le-Zion) Israel 0 Spain 1 (Gonzalez Counago 41).

GROUP 7

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
France	6	4	2	0	12	6	14
Spain	6	4	1	1	11	4	13
Israel	6	2	0	4	7	10	6
Austria	5	1	2	2	4	6	5
Bosnia-Herz	5	0	1	4	2	10	1

Aug 31: Spain v Austria
Sep 1: Bosnia v Israel
Sep 4: Austria v Bosnia
Sep 5: France v Spain
Oct 6: Israel v Austria
Oct 7: France v Bosnia

Group 8

March 23: (Kecskemet) Hungary 4 (Szabics 19, 59, 72, Zabos 90) Lithuania 1 (Beniusis 32). (Bucharest) Romania 0 Italy 1 (Pirlo 20).
March 27: (Tbilisi) Georgia 0 Romania 3 (Cernat 11, Neaga 41, Dragan 73). (Treviso) Italy 1 (Donati 25) Lithuania 0.
June 1: (Bucharest) Romania 1 (Sanmartean 81) Hungary 0. (Tbilisi) Georgia 0 Italy 2 (Corrent 32, Maccarone 41).
June 5: (Panevezys) Lithuania 1 (Beniusis 24) Romania 0. (Budapest) Hungary 2 (Bodnar 68, Terjek 90) Georgia 1 (Melkadze 44).

GROUP 8

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Italy	6	5	1	0	11	3	16
Romania	6	3	1	2	8	3	10
Hungary	5	3	0	2	7	6	9
Lithuania	6	2	0	4	4	10	6
Georgia	5	0	0	5	4	12	0

Aug 31: Georgia v Hungary
Aug 31: Lithuania v Italy
Sep 4: Georgia v Lithuania
Sep 4: Hungary v Romania
Oct 5: Italy v Hungary
Oct 5: Romania v Georgia

Group 9

March 23: (Cologne) Germany 8 (Bierofka 42, 56, Ernst 58, Bruns 64, Rahn 66, Timm 80, 85, 88) Albania 0. (Barnsley) England 4 (Vassell 29, Davis 75, Ameobi 84, 90) Finland 0.
March 27: (Tirana) Albania 0 England 1 (Greening 69). (Athens) Greece 2 (Kyriazis 28, Amanatidis 90) Germany 0.
June 1: (Tampere) Finland 1 (Haarala 42) Germany 3 (Bruns 16, 75, Yilmaz 71). (Iraklion) Greece 0 Albania 0.
June 5: (Athens) Greece 3 (Papadopoulos 26, Vakouftsis 43, Terry og 60) England 1 (Carrick 86).
June 7: (Tirana) Albania 0 Gemany 1 (Bruns 3).

GROUP 9

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Germany	6	4	1	1	15	5	13
Greece	6	4	1	1	10	4	13
England	5	2	2	1	9	6	8
Finland	5	1	1	3	7	12	4
Albania	6	0	1	5	0	14	1

Aug 31: Albania v Finland
Aug 31: Germany v England
Sep 4: England v Albania
Sep 4: Finland v Greece
Oct 10: England v Greece
Oct 10: Germany v Finland

EUROPE

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

1st qualifying rnd, 1st legs

July 11

Araks Ararat (Arm) 0
Serif Tiraspol (Mol) 1 (Barburos 62)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 8,500

Barry Town (Wal) 2 (York 54, French 68)
Shamkir (Aze) 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 1,950

Bohemians (Ire) 3 (Maher 1, Crowe 9, pen 57)
Levadia Maardu (Est) 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 4,200

F91 Dudelange (Lux) 1 (Cicchirillo 44)
Skonto Riga (Lat) 6 (Verpakovskis 1, Miholaps 60, 75, Kolesnicenko 66, 85, Zemlinskis pen 72)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 1,100
Sent off: Facques (Dudelange) 65min

KR Reykjavik (Ice) 2 (Benediktsson 62, S Olafsson 78)
Vllaznia Shkoder (Alb) 1 (Duro 16)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 2,000

Levski Sofia (Bul) 4 (Terziev 8, G Ivanov 21, pen 75, Markov 28)
Zeljeznicar (Bos) 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 15,000

Linfield (NI) 0
Torpedo Kutaisi (Geo) 0
Att: 2,699

Sloga Jugomagnat (Mac) 0
FBK Kaunas (Lit) 0
Att: 4,000

Valletta (Mlt) 0
FC Haka (Fin) 0
Att: 6,000

VB Vagur (Far) 0
Slavia Mozyr (Bls) 0
Att: 480

1st qualifying rnd, 2nd legs

July 18

FC Haka 5 (Torkkeli 4, Kovacs 16, 23, 29, Pogioli 90)
Valletta 0
HT: 4-0
Haka 5-0 on agg

FBK Kaunas 1 (Papeckys 65)
Sloga Jugomagnat 1 (Nuhiji 52)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 1,400
Agg 1-1. Sloga on away goals

Levadia Maardu 0
Bohemians 0
Att: 400
Bohemians 3-0 on agg

Serif Tiraspol 2 (Comlenoc 12, Dadu 90)
Araks Ararat 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 6,000
Sent off: Akopyan (Araks) 88min
Serif 3-0 on agg

Shamkir 0
Barry Town 1 (Phillips 57)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 7,000
Sent off: Kvaratskhelia (Shamkir) 8min
Barry 3-0 on agg

Skonto Riga 0
F91 Dudelange 1 (Cicchirillo 77)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 1,500
Skonto 6-2 on agg

Slavia Mozyr 5 (Jacobsen og 4, Stripeikis 12, pen 29, 32, Rybakov 24)
VB Vagur 0
HT: 5-0. **Att:** 4,000
Slavia 5-0 on agg

Torpedo Kutaisi 1 (Ashvetia 68)
Linfield 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 12,000
Sent off: Khvadagiani (Torpedo) 80min; Bailie (Linfield) 82min
Torpedo 1-0 on agg

Vllaznia Shkoder 1 (Duro 62)
KR Reykjavik 0
HT: 0-0
Agg 2-2. Vllaznia on away goals

2nd qualifying rnd draw

Anderlecht (Blg) v Serif Tiraspol
Shakhtar Donetsk (Ukr) v Lugano (Swi)
Ferencvaros (Hun) v Hajduk Split (Cro)
Bohemians v Halmstads (Swe)
Torpedo Kutaisi v FC Copenhagen (Den)
Omonia Nicosia (Cyp) v Red Star Belgrade (Yug)
FC Haka v Maccabi Haifa (Isr)
Levski Sofia v Brann Bergen (Nor)
Galatasaray (Tur) v Vllaznia Shkoder
FC Porto (Por) v Barry Town
Steaua Bucharest (Rom) v Sloga Jugomagnat
Skonto Riga v Wisla Krakow (Pol)
Slavia Mozyr v Inter Bratislava (Slk)
Maribor (Sln) v Rangers (Sco)
1st legs, July 25; 2nd legs, Aug 1

3rd qualifying rnd draw

Galatasaray or Vllaznia Shkoder
v Levski Sofia or Brann Bergen
Omonia Nicosia or Red Star Belgrade
v Bayer Leverkusen (Ger)
Ajax (Hol) v Celtic (Sco)
Shakhtar Donetsk or Lugano
v Borussia Dortmund (Ger)
Skonto Riga or Wisla Krakow
v Barcelona (Spa)
Bohemians or Halmstads
v Anderlecht or Serif Tiraspol
FC Porto or Barry Town v Grasshopper (Swi)
Lokomotiv Moscow (Rus) v FC Tirol (Swi)
Maribor or Rangers v Fenerbahce (Tur)
Slavia Mozyr or Inter Bratislava
v Rosenborg (Nor)
Slavia Prague (Cze) v Panathinaikos (Gre)
Parma (Ita) v Lille (Fra)
Steaua Bucharest or Sloga Jugomagnat
v Kyiv Dynamo (Ukr)
Torpedo Kutaisi or FC Copenhagen
v Lazio (Ita)
FC Haka or Maccabi Haifa v Liverpool (Eng)
Ferencvaros or Hajduk Split
v Mallorca (Spa)
1st legs, Aug 7/8; 2nd legs, Aug 21/22

UEFA CUP

Qualifying rnd revised draw

Cosmos (SaM) v Rapid Wien (Aut)
Pelister (Mac) v St Gallen (Swi)
Dinamo Bucharest (Rom) v Dinamo Tirana (Alb)
Olimpija Ljubljana (Sln) v Shafa Baku (Aze)
Midtjylland (Den) v Glentoran (NI)
Trans Narva (Est) v Elfsborg (Swe)
Club Brugge (Blg) v IA Akranes (Ice)
Obilic (Yug) v Gl Gotu (Far)*
Brasov (Rom) v Mika Ashtarak (Arm)
Viking (Nor) v Brotnjo (Bos)
CSKA Kyiv (Ukr) v Jokerit (Fin)
Vardar Skopje (Mac) v Standard Liege (Blg)
HJK Helsinki (Fin) v Ventspils (Lat)
Cwmbran Town (Wal) v Slovan Bratislava (Slk)
Maritimo (Por) v Sarajevo (Bos)
Fylkir (Ice) v Pogon Szczecin (Pol)*
Dinamo Zagreb (Cro) v Flora Tallinn (Est)
Glenavon (NI) v Kilmarnock (Sco)
SK Tirana (Alb) v Apollon (Cyp)*
Ararat Yerevan (Arm) v Hapoel Tel Aviv (Isr)*
Etzella Ettelbruck (Lux) v Legia Warsaw (Pol)
Zimbru Chisinau (Mol) v Gaziantepspor (Tur)
Dinaburg (Lat) v Osijek (Cro)
Neftchi Baku (Aze) v HIT Gorica (Sln)
HB Torshavn (Far) v Grazer AK (Aut)
Atlantas (Lit) v Rapid Bucharest (Rom)
Matador Puchov (Slk) v Sliema Wanderers (Mlt)
Longford Town (Ire) v Lovech (Bul)
Brondby (Den) v Shelbourne (Ire)
Santa Coloma (And) v Partizan Belgrade (Yug)
Maccabi Tel Aviv (Isr) v Zalgiris Vilnius (Lit)
Shakhtyor Soligorsk (Bls) v CSKA Sofia (Bul)
MyPa (Fin) v Helsingborgs (Swe)
Dinamo Tbilisi (Geo) v BATE Borisov (Bls)
Debrecen (Hun) v Nistru Otaci (Mol)
Polonia Warsaw (Pol) v Total Network Solutions (Wal)
Birkirkara (Mlt) v Lokomotiv Tbilisi (Geo)*
AEK Athens (Gre) v Grevenmacher (Lux)*
Ruzomberok (Slk) v Belshina Bobruisk (Bls)
Olympiakos Nicosia (Cyp) v Dunaferr (Hun)
Vaduz (Lie) v Varteks (Cro)
1st legs, Aug 9; 2nd legs, Aug 23
**Ties reversed from original draw; team given first here will play 1st leg at home*

INTERTOTO CUP

1st rnd, 1st legs

June 16: AGF Aarhus (Den) 1 Publikum Celje (Sln) 0; Anorthosis Famagusta (Cyp) 0 Slaven Belupo (Cro) 2; B68 Toftir (Far) 2 Lokeren (Blg) 4; Carmarthen Town (Wal) 0 AIK Stockholm (Swe) 0; Cork City (Ire) 0 Metalurgs Liepaja (Lat) 1; Dinamo Minsk (Bls) 6 Hobscheid (Lux) 0; Dundee (Sco) 0 Sartid (Yug) 0; Sant Julia (And) 1 Lausanne (Swi) 3; Tatabanya (Hun) 2 Shirak Gyumri (Arm) 3; Universitatea Craiova (Rom) 3 Bylis Ballsh (Alb) 3; WIT Georgia (Geo) 1 SV Ried (Aut) 0.
June 17: Celik (Bos) 1 Denizlispor (Tur) 0; Ekranas (Lit) 1 Artmedia Petrzalka (Slk) 1; Grindavik (Ice) 1 Vilash (Aze) 0; Groclin (Pol) 1 Spartak Varna (Bul) 0; Hapoel Haifa (Isr) 2 Tallina VMK (Est) 0; FC Jazz (Fin) 1 Gloria Bistrita (Rom) 0; Tiligul Tiraspol (Mol) 1 Cliftonville (NI) 0; Zaglebie Lubin (Pol) 4 Hibernians (Mlt) 0; Zagreb (Cro) 1 Pobeda Prilep (Mac) 2.

1st rnd, 2nd legs

June 23: AIK Stockholm 3 Carmarthen Town 0 *AIK 3-0 on agg*; Bylis Ballsh 0 Universitatea Craiova 1 *U Craiova 4-3 on agg*; Cliftonville 1 Tiligul Tiraspol 3 (aet) *Tiligul 4-1 on agg*; Gloria Bistrita 2 FC Jazz 1 *Agg 2-2. FC Jazz on away goals*; Hibernians 1 Zaglebie Lubin 0 *Zaglebie 4-1 on agg*; Lausanne 6 Sant Julia 0 *Lausanne 9-1 on agg*; Lokeren 0 B68 Toftir 0 *Lokeren 4-2 on agg*; Metalurgs Liepaja 2 Cork City 1 *Metalurgs 3-1 on agg*; Publikum Celje 7 AGF Aarhus 1 *Publikum 7-2 on agg*; Sartid 5 Dundee 2 *Sartid 5-2 on agg*; Slaven Belupo 7 Anorthosis Famagusta 0 *Slaven 9-0 on agg*; TVMK Tallinn 0 Hapoel Haifa 3 *Hapoel 5-0 on agg.*
June 24: Artmedia Petrzalka 1 Ekranas 1 (aet) *Agg 2-2. Petrzalka 5-4 on pens*; Denizlispor 3 Celik 5 *Celik 6-3 on agg*; Hobscheid 1 Dinamo Minsk 1 *Dinamo 7-1 on agg*; Pobeda Prilep 1 Zagreb 1 *Pobeda 3-2 on agg*; SV Ried 2 WIT Georgia 1 *Agg 2-2. WIT Georgia on away goals*; Shirak Gyumri 1 Tatabanya 3 *Tatabanya 5-4 on agg*; Spartak Varna 4 Groclin 0 *Spartak 4-1 on agg*; Vilash 1 Grindavik 2 *Grindavik 3-1 on agg.*

2nd rnd, 1st legs

June 30: Basle (Swi) 3 Grindavik 0; Celik 1 Gent (Blg) 0; Dinamo Minsk 2 Hapoel Haifa 0; Pobeda Prilep 2 Rizespor (Tur) 1; Slaven Belupo 1 Bastia (Fra) 0; Sturm Graz (Aut) 0 Lausanne 1; Troyes (Fra) 6 WIT Georgia 0.
July 1: Metalurgs Liepaja 3 Heerenveen (Hol) 2; 1860 Munich (Ger) 3 Sartid 1; OB Odense (Den) 2 AIK Stockholm 2; Paris Saint-Germain (Fra) 3 FC Jazz 0; Publikum Celje 5 Artmedia Petrzalka 0; Spartak Varna 0 Tavriya (Ukr) 3; Synot (Cze) 3 Universitatea Craiova 2; Tiligul Tiraspol 1 Tatabanya 1; Zaglebie 2 Lokeren 2.

2nd rnd, 2nd legs

July 7: AIK Stockholm 2 OB Odense 0 *AIK 4-2 on agg*; Bastia 0 Slaven Belupo 1 *Slaven 2-0 on agg*; Gent 2 Celik 0 *Genk 2-1 on agg*; Heerenveen 6 Metalurgs Liepaja 1 *Heerenveen 8-4 on agg*; Lausanne 3 Sturm Graz 3 *Lausanne 4-3 on agg*; Lokeren 2 Zaglebie 1 *Lokeren 4-3 on agg*; Rizespor 0 Pobeda Prilep 2 *Pobeda 4-1 on agg*; Sartid 2 1860 Munich 3 *1860 6-3 on agg*; Tatabanya 4 Tiligul Tiraspol 0 *Tatabanya 5-1 on agg*; Universitatea Craiova 2 Synot 2 *Synot 5-4 on agg*.
July 8: Artmedia Petrzalka 1 Publikum Celje 1 *Publikum 6-1 on agg*; Grindavik 0 Basle 2 *Basle 5-0 on agg*; Hapoel Haifa 0 Dinamo Minsk 1 *Dinamo 3-0 on agg*; FC Jazz 1 Paris Saint-Germain 4 *PSG 7-1 on agg*; Tavriya 2 Spartak Varna 2 *Tavriya 5-2 on agg*; WIT Georgia 1 Troyes 1 *Troyes 7-1 on agg*.

3rd rnd, 1st legs

July 14: Basle 2 Heerenveen 1; Brescia (Ita) 2 Tatabanya 1; Chmel Blsany (Cze) 0 Pobeda Prilep 0; Lokeren 0 Newcastle United (Eng) 4; Publikum Celje 1 Lausanne 1; Slaven Belupo 2 Aston Villa (Eng) 1; Werder Bremen (Ger) 2 Gent 3; Wolfsburg (Ger) 4 Dinamo Minsk 3.
July 15: Rennes (Fra) 5 Synot 0; RKC Waalwijk (Hol) 1 1860 Munich 2; Tavriya 0 Paris Saint-Germain 1; Troyes 2 AIK Stockholm 1.

3rd rnd, 2nd legs

July 21: AIK Stockholm 1 Troyes 2 *Troyes 4-2 on agg*; Aston Villa 2 Slaven Belupo 0 *Aston Villa 3-2 on agg*; Dinamo Minsk 0 Wolfsburg 0 *Wolfsburg 4-3 on agg*; Gent 0 Werder Bremen 1 *Agg 3-3. Gent on away goals*; Heerenveen 2 Basle 3 *Basle 5-3 on agg*; Lausanne 0 Publikum Celje 0 *Agg 1-1 Lausanne on away goals*; 1860 Munich 3 RKC Waalwijk 1 *1860 5-2 on agg*; Newcastle United 1 Lokeren 0 *Newcastle 5-0 on agg*; Paris Saint-Germain 4 Tavriya 0 *PSG 5-0 on agg*; Pobeda Prilep 0 Chmel Blsany 1 *Chmel Blsany 1-0 on agg*; Synot 4 Rennes 2 *Rennes 7-4 on agg*; Tatabanya 1 Brescia 1 *Brescia 3-2 on agg*

ANDORRA

ANDORRA: CH'SHIP PLAY-OFFS – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Santa Coloma	6	4	1	1	15	6	25 [12]
Mat. Sant Julia	6	3	1	2	11	7	21 [11]
Construccions	6	1	2	3	5	11	12 [7]
Principat	6	1	2	3	4	11	12 [7]

Teams carried forward one-third of points gained during regular season (figure in brackets)

AUSTRIA

July 10: Grazer AK 0 FC Tirol 2.
July 11: Bregenz 1 Admira 0; Karnten 1 SV Ried 2; Rapid Wien 3 Sturm Graz 1; Salzburg 0 Austria Wien 0.
July 17: Sturm Graz 1 Salzburg 0.
July 18: Karnten 1 Admira 0; Grazer AK 3 Austria Wien 2; SV Ried 2 Rapid Wien 2; FC Tirol 5 Bregenz 0.

AUSTRIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Tirol	2	2	0	0	7	0	6
Rapid Wien	2	1	1	0	5	3	4
SV Ried	2	1	1	0	4	3	4
Karnten	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Grazer AK	2	1	0	1	3	4	3
Sturm Graz	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
Bregenz	2	1	0	1	1	5	3
Austria Wien	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
Salzburg	2	0	1	1	0	1	1
Admira	2	0	0	2	0	2	0

AZERBAIJAN

AZERBAIJAN – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shamkir	20	16	3	1	60	14	51
Neftchi	20	16	3	1	57	11	51
Vilash	20	11	5	4	24	11	38
Shafa	20	10	1	9	27	26	31
Turan Tovuz	20	9	3	8	42	28	30
Dinamo	20	9	2	9	30	29	29
Hazar Univ	20	9	2	9	26	38	29
Kapaz	20	8	1	11	34	29	25
Garabagh	20	5	4	11	19	34	19
Araz	20	3	3	14	14	55	12
Shahdag*	20	0	1	19	5	63	1

**Shahdag withdrew after the winter break; all remaining games were awarded 3-0 against them*

Championship play-off

May 15, 2000 - Sumgayit
Shamkir 1 (Asadov og 21)
Neftchi 0
HT: 1-0

FRANCE

CHAMPIONS TROPHY

July 19 - Strasbourg
Nantes 4 (Quint 7, Armand 38, Dalmat 89, Savinaud 90)
Strasbourg 1 (Ljuboja 17)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 7,547. **Ref:** Sars

HUNGARY

July 14: Dunaferr 2 Ujpest 1; Gyor 0 Debrecen 1; Ferencvaros 0 Zalaegerszeg 1; Haladas 1 Kispest-Honved 0.
July 15: Videoton 1 Matav 0; Vasas 0 MTK 1.

HUNGARY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dunaferr	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Debrecen	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Haladas	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
MTK	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Videoton	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Zalaegerszeg	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Ujpest	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Ferencvaros	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Gyor	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Kispest-Honved	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Matav	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Vasas	1	0	0	1	0	1	0

NORWAY

June 22: Brann 0 Molde 0.
June 24: Lillestrom 3 Moss 0; Lyn 4 Tromso 0; Odd Grenland 4 Bryne 1; Sogndal 5 Stromsgodset 1; Stabaek 3 Rosenborg 0; Viking 2 Bodo/Glimt 2.
July 1: Bodo/Glimt 2 Sogndal 2; Bryne 1 Lyn 2; Molde 2 Viking 1; Moss 1 Stabaek 3; Rosenborg 3 Brann 3; Stromsgodset 0 Odd Grenland 2; Tromso 0 Lillestrom 3.
July 8: Bodo/Glimt 3 Molde 2; Bryne 0 Lillestrom 5; Moss 2 Brann 3; Rosenborg 1 Viking 1; Sogndal 3 Odd Grenland 3; Stromsgodset 3 Lyn 3; Tromso 0 Stabaek 2.

NORWAY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lillestrom	14	9	2	3	33	17	29
Rosenborg	14	8	4	2	36	19	28
Viking	14	8	4	2	28	16	28
Stabaek	14	9	1	4	25	21	28
Odd Grenland	14	8	3	3	30	15	27
Brann	14	7	4	3	35	22	25
Molde	14	6	3	5	27	23	21
Sogndal	14	5	2	7	22	31	17
Moss	14	5	1	8	19	26	16
Lyn	14	3	5	6	22	23	14
Bodo/Glimt	14	2	6	6	17	26	12
Stromsgodset	14	2	5	7	20	36	11
Tromso	14	3	0	11	8	27	9
Bryne	14	2	2	10	14	34	8

POLAND

SUPER CUP

July 15
Wisla 4 (Pater 19, 74, Zurawski 36, Nicinski 87)
Polonia 3 (Pawlak 37, Bak 57, Trachulski 70)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 8,500

RUSSIA

June 24: Chernomorets 1 Zenit 4; Rotor 1 Anzhi 1; Rostselmash 3 Alaniya 0; Torpedo-ZIL 1 Torpedo M 1; Saturn 2 Kryliya Sovetov 0; Fakel 1 Dinamo 2; CSKA 4 Sokol 0.
June 25: Spartak 1 Lokomotiv M 0.
June 30: Kryliya Sovetov 3 Fakel 1; Torpedo M 1 Saturn 4; Alaniya 1 Torpedo-ZIL 1; Anzhi 0 Rostselmash 1; Lokomotiv M 2 Rotor 0; Zenit 2 Spartak 1; Sokol 0 Chernomorets 0; CSKA 2 Dinamo 0.
July 11: Spartak 5 Chernomorets 0; Fakel 1 Alaniya 0; Saturn 1 Anzhi 0; Torpedo-ZIL 0 Lokomotiv M 4; Rostselmash 1 Zenit 2; Rotor 1 Sokol 2; Kryliya Sovetov 0 CSKA 0.
July 12: Dinamo 0 Torpedo M 4.
July 18: CSKA 1 Spartak 1; Chernomorets 2 Rotor 3; Sokol 1 Rostselmash 1; Zenit 4 Torpedo-ZIL 0; Lokomotiv M 1 Saturn 1; Anzhi 2 Fakel 2; Alaniya 3 Dinamo 3; Torpedo M 0 Kryliya Sovetov 4.

RUSSIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kryliya Sovetov	17	10	3	4	23	9	33
Spartak	17	9	5	3	22	13	32
Lokomotiv M	17	9	4	4	28	12	31
Zenit	17	9	4	4	27	21	31
Torpedo M	17	8	5	4	31	21	29
Sokol	17	8	5	4	21	22	29
CSKA	17	7	6	4	20	13	27
Saturn	17	6	5	6	19	13	23
Rostselmash	17	6	3	8	16	17	21
Dinamo	17	5	6	6	21	23	21
Anzhi	17	4	7	6	13	14	19
Alaniya	17	5	3	9	16	26	18
Fakel	17	4	4	9	16	22	16
Rotor	17	4	4	9	17	25	16
Torpedo-ZIL	17	3	5	9	12	26	14
Chernomorets	17	2	5	10	9	34	11

SPAIN

CUP FINAL

June 30 - Olympic stadium, Seville
Celta Vigo 1 (Mostovoi 6)
Zaragoza 3 (Aguado 24, Jamelli pen 38, Yordi 90)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 52,000. **Ref:** Garcia Aranda

SWEDEN

June 24: Norrkoping 1 Hacken 1.
June 25: Trelleborgs 2 Hammarby 3; Djurgardens 3 IFK Gothenburg 1; Helsingborgs 2 Orebro 2.
June 26: Halmstads 4 Malmo 2.
June 27: AIK 2 Orgryte 2.
July 1: Hacken 2 Trelleborgs 2; Elfsborg 1 Djurgardens 2.
July 2: Orebro 1 Halmstads 1; Hammarby 3 Helsingborgs 1; Malmo 2 Sundsvall 0.
July 3: IFK Gothenburg 2 Norrkoping 1.
July 4: AIK 3 Elfsborg 1.
July 7: Orebro 1 Sundsvall 1.
July 8: Norrkoping 2 Djurgardens 0; Orgryte 1 Malmo 4.
July 11: Orgryte 1 AIK 0.
July 15: Halmstads 1 Hammarby 2; Trelleborgs 0 IFK Gothenburg 0; Hacken 2 Helsingborgs 2.

SWEDEN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
IFK Gothenburg	13	6	5	2	22	12	23
Hammarby	13	6	5	2	18	12	23
Orgryte	14	6	5	3	21	16	23
Malmo	13	7	1	5	22	16	22
Helsingborgs	13	5	5	3	20	14	20
Djurgardens	13	5	5	3	14	14	20
AIK	14	5	4	5	17	16	19
Halmstads	13	5	3	5	26	17	18
Elfsborg	13	5	2	6	20	24	17
Orebro	13	3	7	3	20	19	16
Norrkoping	13	3	5	5	11	21	14
Hacken	13	2	6	5	14	21	12
Sundsvall	13	2	4	7	8	17	10
Trelleborgs	13	2	3	8	14	28	9

SWITZERLAND

July 4: Sion 8 Basle 1; St Gallen 3 Lausanne 0.
July 7: Grasshopper 1 Aarau 0; Lucerne 0 Neuchatel Xamax 0; Servette 0 Zurich 2; Young Boys 1 Lugano 1.
July 11: Basle 3 Servette 1; Lausanne 2 Young Boys 3; Lugano 0 Sion 1.
July 14: Aarau 3 Lucerne 2; Lugano 5 Grasshopper 3; Neuchatel Xamax 0 Sion 0; Zurich 3 St Gallen 2.
July 17: Sion 0 Aarau 1.
July 18: Grasshopper 1 Young Boys 1; Lausanne 1 Zurich 1; Lucerne 1 Lugano 2; Servette 2 Neuchatel Xamax 0; St Gallen 3 Basle 3.

SWITZERLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sion	4	2	1	1	9	2	7
Zurich	3	2	1	0	6	3	7
Lugano	4	2	1	1	8	6	7
Aarau	3	2	0	1	4	3	6
Young Boys	3	1	2	0	5	4	5
St Gallen	3	1	1	1	8	6	4
Grasshopper	3	1	1	1	5	6	4
Basle	3	1	1	1	7	12	4
Servette	3	1	0	2	3	5	3
Neuchatel Xamax	3	0	2	1	0	2	2
Lucerne	3	0	1	2	3	5	1
Lausanne	3	0	1	2	3	7	1

UKRAINE

July 7: Dynamo 5 Poligraftekhnika 0; Shakhtar 5 Zakarpattya 1; Vorskla 1 Dnipro 2; Kryvbas 1 Metalurh M 1; Metalurh Z 0 Metalurh D 3; Metalist 2 CSKA 1.
July 11: Tavriya 3 Karpaty 0.
July 15: Dynamo 2 Shakhtar 2; Metalurh M 1 Vorskla 0; Kryvbas 2 Metalurh Z 1; Metalurh D 5 Metalist 0; Poligraftekhnika 1 CSKA 0; Zakarpattya 0 Dnipro 0.

UKRAINE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Metalurh D	2	2	0	0	8	0	6
Dynamo	2	1	1	0	7	2	4
Shakhtar	2	1	1	0	7	3	4
Kryvbas	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
Dnipro	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Metalurh M	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Tavriya	1	1	0	0	3	0	3
Metalist	2	1	0	1	2	6	3
Poligraftekhnika	2	1	0	1	1	5	3
Zakarpattya	2	0	1	1	1	5	1
CSKA	2	0	0	2	1	3	0
Vorskla	2	0	0	2	1	3	0
Karpaty	1	0	0	1	0	3	0
Metalurh Z	2	0	0	2	1	5	0

SOUTH AMERICA

BOLIVIA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

June 20: Mariscal Braun 3 Guabira 0; The Strongest 8 Union Central 4; Jorge Wilstermann 3 Bolivar 3.
June 21: Independiente 0 Blooming 2; Santa Cruz 1 Iberoamericana 0; Oriente 2 Real Potosi 1.
June 24: Real Potosi 1 Mariscal Braun 1; Guabira 0 Santa Cruz 0; Union Central 1 Jorge Wilstermann 0; Blooming 1 The Strongest 2; Iberoamericana 5 Independiente 1; Bolivar 3 Oriente 2.

BOLIVIA: OPENING – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bolivar	22	12	6	4	53	28	42
Oriente	22	13	3	6	48	31	42
Blooming	22	9	9	4	34	25	36
The Strongest	22	10	4	8	42	34	34
J Wilstermann	22	8	9	5	40	36	33
Real Potosi	22	8	7	7	33	34	31
Union Central	22	9	3	10	27	34	30
Independiente	22	7	6	9	29	39	27
Mariscal Braun	22	6	6	10	31	36	24
Guabira	22	6	5	11	25	35	23
Iberoamericana	22	5	5	12	37	47	20
Santa Cruz	22	5	5	12	23	43	20

Championship play-off

June 27: Bolivar 1 Oriente 0.

CHILE

June 23: Santiago Morning 2 U Catolica 2; Dep Concepcion 3 Puerto Montt 0; Coquimbo Unido 0 Huachipato 3; Union Espanola 2 Rangers 2; Cobreloa 3 Palestino 1.
June 24: Colo Colo 1 Santiago Wanderers 0; Audax Italiano 2 O'Higgins 1; San Felipe 1 U de Chile 1.
June 30: O'Higgins 1 Cobreloa 1; Palestino 0 San Felipe 0; U de Chile 4 Union Espanola 0.
July 1: Santiago Wanderers 1 Audax Italiano 0; Huachipato 2 Dep Concepcion 2; U Catolica 1 Colo Colo 1; Puerto Montt 0 Santiago Morning 0.
July 2: Rangers 3 Coquimbo Unido 0.

CHILE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
U de Chile	15	10	4	1	35	14	34
Colo Colo	15	8	5	2	28	15	29
Sant Wanderers	15	8	4	3	25	14	28
Cobreloa	15	7	5	3	21	12	26
Palestino	15	8	1	6	20	22	25
San Felipe	15	6	5	4	22	18	23
U Catolica	15	6	4	5	25	19	22
Union Espanola	15	6	4	5	28	31	22
Dep Concepcion	15	6	3	6	20	20	21
Coquimbo Unido	15	6	3	6	15	19	21
Huachipato	15	4	6	5	25	21	18
Rangers	15	4	6	5	20	19	18
Audax Italiano	15	5	1	9	13	19	16
O'Higgins	15	3	2	10	18	39	11
Puerto Montt	15	2	4	9	13	31	10
Sant Morning	15	1	3	11	19	34	6

COLOMBIA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

June 24: Dep Cali 4 America 1; Millonarios 2 Tolima 1; Dep Pasto 1 At Nacional 2; Indep Medellin 0 Bucaramanga 0; At Huila 2 Indep Santa Fe 2; Real Cartagena 2 Once Caldas 2; Envigado 1 Tulua 1; Pereira 2 At Junior 0.
June 27: At Nacional 0 Tulua 1; Tolima 1 Envigado 0; At Junior 1 Millonarios 0; America 2 Pereira 1; Once Caldas 2 Dep Cali 1; Indep Santa Fe 4 Real Cartagena 1; Bucaramanga 0 At Huila 0; Dep Pasto 2 Indep Medellin 2.
July 1: Tulua 1 Tolima 0; Millonarios 2 America 2; Dep Cali 3 Indep Santa Fe 1; Envigado 1 At Junior 1; Pereira 1 Once Caldas 2; Real Cartagena 1 Bucaramanga 0; At Huila 4 Dep Pasto 1; Indep Medellin 2 At Nacional 1.

COLOMBIA: OPENING – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tulua	22	12	6	4	30	19	42
Dep Cali	22	11	5	6	31	21	38
Once Caldas	22	11	5	6	35	27	38
Tolima	22	11	3	8	34	28	36
Indep Medellin	22	9	7	6	40	25	34
Indep Santa Fe	22	9	7	6	28	23	34
America	22	10	3	9	37	39	33
At Junior	22	8	7	7	22	23	31
Millonarios	22	8	4	10	29	23	28
Envigado	22	7	7	8	26	30	28
Pereira	22	8	3	11	26	34	27
At Nacional	22	7	5	10	18	28	26
Real Cartagena	22	7	4	11	23	28	25
At Huila	22	6	4	12	28	40	22
Bucaramanga	22	4	10	8	10	18	22
Dep Pasto	22	5	6	11	23	34	21

ECUADOR

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

June 20: Barcelona 1 El Nacional 0; Delfin 1 Aucas 2; Espoli 4 Macara 3; Olmedo 1 LDU Portoviejo 0; Dep Quito 1 Emelec 1.
June 24: LDU Portoviejo 3 Espoli 1; Macara 3 Dep Quito 1; Aucas 0 Barcelona 0; El Nacional 2 Delfin 1; Emelec 3 Olmedo 1.

ECUADOR: OPENING – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
El Nacional	18	11	4	3	33	20	37
Espoli	18	9	5	4	34	22	32
Olmedo	18	10	2	6	27	23	32
Macara	18	7	4	7	25	20	25
Aucas	18	5	10	3	16	13	25
Emelec	18	6	6	6	25	28	24
Barcelona	18	5	6	7	18	18	21
Delfin	18	5	5	8	22	31	20
LDU Portoviejo	18	4	4	10	17	25	16
Dep Quito	18	3	4	11	16	33	13

PERU

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

June 24: Universitario 1 Sporting Cristal 2; Sport Boys 3 Alianza Lima 0; Coopsol Trujillo 3 Alianza Atletico 1; Estudiantes 0 Dep Wanka 0; Union Minas 0 Juan Aurich 0; Cienciano 1 Melgar 2.
June 27: Alianza Atletico 1 Sport Boys 0; Alianza Lima 3 Estudiantes 0; Sporting Cristal 3 Union Minas 1.
June 29: Dep Wanka 2 Coopsol Trujillo 1; Juan Aurich 1 Cienciano 3; Melgar 2 Universitario 0.

PERU: OPENING – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sporting Cristal	22	13	7	2	46	18	46
Alianza Lima	22	13	7	2	40	19	46
Melgar	22	10	5	7	45	30	35
Cienciano	22	11	2	9	43	28	35
Sport Boys	22	9	4	9	36	40	31
Juan Aurich	22	9	4	9	34	39	31
Alianza Atletico	22	9	3	10	24	39	30
Universitario	22	8	5	9	29	30	29
Coopsol Trujillo	22	7	4	11	38	47	25
Union Minas	22	7	2	13	30	39	23
Estudiantes	22	5	5	12	25	53	20
Dep Wanka	22	4	6	12	27	36	18

Championship play-off

July 1: Alianza Lima 2 Sporting Cristal 1.

CENTRAL & NORTH AMERICA

UNITED STATES

June 20: New England Revolution 3 Colorado Rapids 3.
June 23: San Jose Earthquakes 2 Kansas City Wizards 0; Los Angeles Galaxy 2 MetroStars 0; Tampa Bay Mutiny 3 DC United 2; Dallas Burn 1 Columbus Crew 2; Chicago Fire 1 New England Revolution 1.
June 30: Dallas Burn 0 Los Angeles Galaxy 0; DC United 1 Colorado Rapids 1; Miami Fusion 4 Columbus Crew 3; New England Revolution 0 San Jose Earthquakes 0; Chicago Fire 3 MetroStars 1; Kansas City Wizards 3 Tampa Bay Mutiny 0.
July 4: Los Angeles Galaxy 0 Columbus Crew 2; San Jose Earthquakes 1 Miami Fusion 1; Tampa Bay Mutiny 1 MetroStars 2; Kansas City Wizards 0 Chicago Fire 7; Dallas Burn 1 New England Revolution 1; Colorado Rapids 3 DC United 1.
July 7: Columbus Crew 2 Dallas Burn 2; Tampa Bay Mutiny 2 Chicago Fire 3; Miami Fusion 0 MetroStars 3; New England Revolution 1 Kansas City Wizards 2; DC United 0 Los Angeles Galaxy 3; Colorado Rapids 3 San Jose Earthquakes 1.
July 14: Los Angeles Galaxy 3 Miami Fusion 0; San Jose Earthquakes 2 Tampa Bay Mutiny 1; New England Revolution 1 DC United 3; Chicago Fire 1 Colorado Rapids 0; Kansas City Wizards 3 Dallas Burn 2.
July 17: New England Revolution 3 Los Angeles Galaxy 2.
July 18: Miami Fusion 2 Chicago Fire 1; Columbus Crew 2 MetroStars 1; Dallas Burn 3 Tampa Bay Mutiny 0; Colorado Rapids 0 Kansas City Wizards 0; San Jose Earthquakes 4 DC United 0.

USA – EASTERN DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Miami Fusion	18	12	3	3	38	23	39
MetroStars	18	8	3	7	26	24	27
DC United	18	6	1	11	29	36	19
New England	18	5	4	9	23	31	19

USA – CENTRAL DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chicago Fire	17	10	3	4	34	18	33
Dallas Burn	18	7	4	7	33	29	25
Columbus Crew	16	6	5	5	27	26	23
Tampa Bay	19	3	1	15	23	48	10

USA – WESTERN DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
San Jose	18	10	5	3	31	18	35
LA Galaxy	20	9	5	6	38	29	32
Kansas City	19	8	2	9	23	38	26
Colorado Rapids	19	4	6	9	25	30	18

LEADING GOALSCORERS

12	Diego Serna (Miami Fusion)
11	John Spencer (Colorado Rapids)
9	Alex Pineda Chacon (Miami Fusion)
9	Mamadou Diallo (Tampa Bay Mutiny)
9	Abdul Thompson Conteh (DC United)

AFRICA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

MATCH SCHEDULE

Group A

Aug 11: Mamelodi Sundowns (SAf) v Esperance (Tun); TP Mazembe (DRC) v Julius Berger (Nig).
Aug 25: Esperance v TP Mazembe; Julius Berger v Mamelodi Sundowns.
Sep 8: Julius Berger v Esperance.
Sep 9: TP Mazembe v Mamelodi Sundowns.
Sep 22: Esperance v Julius Berger; Mamelodi Sundowns v TP Mazembe.
Oct 6: Esperance v Mamelodi Sundowns; Julius Berger v TP Mazembe.
Oct 20: Mamelodi Sundowns v Julius Berger.
Oct 21: TP Mazembe v Esperance.

Group B

Aug 10: Chabab Belouizdad (Alg) v ASEC Abidjan (IvC).
Aug 12: Petro Atletico (Ang) v Al Ahly (Egy).
Aug 24: Al Ahly v Chabab Belouizdad.
Aug 26: ASEC Abidjan v Petro Atletico.
Sep 7: Chabab Belouizdad v Petro Atletico.
Sep 9: ASEC Abidjan v Al Ahly.
Sep 21: Al Ahly v ASEC Abidjan.
Sep 23: Petro Atletico v Chabab Belouizdad.
Oct 5: Al Ahly v Petro Atletico.
Oct 7: ASEC Abidjan v Chabab Belouizdad.
Oct 19: Chabab Belouizdad v Al Ahly.
Oct 21: Petro Atletico v ASEC Abidjan.

Semi-finals

Group A runners-up v Group B winners
Group B runners-up v Group A winners
1st legs, Nov 2-4 (runners-up at home); 2nd legs, Nov 16-18

Final to be played over two legs in December

CUP-WINNERS CUP

Quarter-finals draw

Evizo (Gab) v Kumbo Strikers (Cam)
Kaizer Chiefs (SAf) v Ismaili (Egy)
Niger Tornadoes (Nig) v Inter Luanda (Ang)
Zamalek (Egy) v Club Africain (Tun)
1st legs, Sep 7-9; 2nd legs, Sep 21-23

CAF CUP

Quarter-finals draw

Etoile Sahel (Tun) v Ajax Cape Town (SAf)
Ferroviario Maputo (Moz) v Cotonsport (Cam)
Goldfields (Gha) v Africa Sports (IvC)
Wydad Casablanca (Mor) v JS Kabylie (Alg)
1st legs, Sep 7-9; 2nd legs, Sep 21-23

ASIA

JAPAN

FIRST STAGE

June 23: Jubilo Iwata 2 Avispa Fukuoka 1 (aet); Kashima Antlers 2 Yokohama F Marinos 0; Urawa Reds 2 Consadole Sapporo 0; JEF United Ichihara 2 Shimizu S-Pulse 0; Tokyo Verdy 1969 1 Vissel Kobe 0 (aet); Nagoya Grampus Eight 1 Kashiwa Reysol 4; Cerezo Osaka 1 FC Tokyo 2 (aet); Sanfrecce Hiroshima 2 Gamba Osaka 3.
July 7: Consadole Sapporo 2 JEF United Ichihara 3 (aet); Shimizu S-Pulse 5 Sanfrecce Hiroshima 1; Kashiwa Reysol 3 Urawa Reds 2; FC Tokyo 2 Kashima Antlers 0; Yokohama F Marinos 1 Jubilo Iwata 2 (aet); Gamba Osaka 5 Tokyo Verdy 1969 0; Vissel Kobe 3 Cerezo Osaka 1; Avispa Fukuoka 0 Nagoya Grampus Eight 4.
July 11: Nagoya Grampus Eight 2 Shimizu S-Pulse 1 (aet).
July 14: Kashima Antlers 2 Vissel Kobe 0; Urawa Reds 3 JEF United Ichihara 1; FC Tokyo 0 Gamba Osaka 2; Yokohama F Marinos 1 Shimizu S-Pulse 3; Jubilo Iwata 2 Tokyo Verdy 1969 1 (aet); Nagoya Grampus Eight 3 Sanfrecce Hiroshima 2 (aet); Cerezo Osaka 3 Kashiwa Reysol 2; Avispa Fukuoka 0 Consadole Sapporo 2.
July 21: Sanfrecce Hiroshima 1 Urawa Reds 3; Gamba Osaka 3 Kashima Antlers 1; Consadole Sapporo 1 Yokohama F Marinos 1 (aet); Vissel Kobe 2 Jubilo Iwata 2 (aet); Shimizu S-Pulse 1 FC Tokyo 2 (aet); Tokyo Verdy 1969 0 Nagoya Grampus Eight 3; JEF United Ichihara 4 Cerezo Osaka 2; Kashiwa Reysol 1 Avispa Fukuoka 0.

JAPAN: FIRST STAGE – FINAL

	P	W1	W2	D	L	F	A	Pts
Jubilo Iwata	15	9	4	1	1	32	12	36
JEF United	15	7	3	0	5	35	26	27
Grampus Eight	15	5	5	2	3	29	20	27
Shimizu S-Pulse	15	6	4	0	5	28	18	26
Gamba Osaka	15	7	2	0	6	29	22	25
Kashiwa Reysol	15	6	2	0	7	29	23	22
Urawa Reds	15	6	1	1	7	24	22	21
Consadole Sapp	15	6	0	3	6	20	21	21
FC Tokyo	15	5	3	0	7	18	19	21
Vissel Kobe	15	5	1	2	7	16	20	19
Kashima Antlers	15	5	1	1	8	21	23	18
Avispa Fukuoka	15	4	1	0	10	13	25	14
Sanfrecce H	15	3	2	0	10	25	33	13
Cerezo Osaka	15	3	0	2	10	22	31	11
Yokohama FM	15	3	0	2	10	13	24	11
Tokyo Verdy 1969	15	2	2	0	11	16	31	10

W1 = win in 90mins – 3pts; W2 = win in extra time – 2pts; Draw = 1pt

QUALIFYING UPDATE

AFRICA

Senegal in the finals!

The West Africans join Tunisia, South Africa and Cameroon as qualifiers

SENEGAL became the fourth African team to qualify for the finals when they beat Namibia in their final qualifying game, while nearest rivals in Group C, Egypt, could only draw with Algeria.

A week earlier, Tunisia had become the third African side to ensure World Cup qualification, winning by a record margin away to the Democratic Republic of Congo in Kinshasa, while Ivory Coast, the only team who could catch them, were held to a draw away to Congo.

Senegal and Tunisia join Cameroon and South Africa, who were the first to book their places in the finals in Japan and South Korea next year.

Senegal and Egypt had both gone into the final round of qualifiers with hopes of finishing top of Group C after Morocco had lost their final game to Senegal a week earlier.

Morocco needed only a point to qualify for the finals, but were beaten 1-0 in a dramatic match. France-based El Hadji Diouf scored the winner for Senegal in the first half of a game watched by a 60,000 crowd in Dakar.

A week later, **Senegal** thrashed Namibia 5-0 in chilly conditions in Windhoek to reach the finals for the first time in their history.

Pape Thiaw (two), El Hadji Diouf, Khalilou Fadiga and Moussa N'Diaye scored for the Senegalese, who were 3-0 up at half-time. The result put Senegal top of the group, ahead of Morocco on goal difference.

Ahmed Hossam raised **Egypt**'s hopes of finishing with a better goal difference than Senegal when he scored after 59 minutes against Algeria in Annaba, but Yacine Bezzaz levelled near the end to deny Egypt victory.

Going for goal...South Africa's Bradley August against Burkina Faso

Tunisia's progress to the finals was most impressive, even if they had a change of coaching personnel halfway through the campaign, when Francesco Scoglio returned to Italy and veteran German Eckhard Krautzen took over.

Their 6-0 home win against **Congo** on July 1 was followed two weeks later by a 3-0 win away in **DR Congo**, the heaviest home defeat ever suffered by the former Zaire.

Tunisia went into the match with a three-point lead over Ivory Coast but having played one more game, meaning they had to win in the cauldron at the Stade de Martyrs. They did it with quiet efficiency, however, sparking a riot among frustrated home fans.

Defender Khaled Badra put the North Africans ahead after 14 minutes, with a double from Zoubier Baya just after half-time sealing the win.

The result meant **Ivory Coast** had to win in neighbouring Congo, but they did not even score until the 82nd minute, Belgium-based defender Mamadou Coulibaly rising to head in a corner on the sandy pitch at Pointe Noire's tatty Municipal stadium.

The lead lasted just four minutes, with Walter Bakouma killing off the Ivorians' qualification hopes by converting a penalty.

Cameroon topped Group A to set a new record for Africa by qualifying for the World Cup finals for the fifth time, but once again their performances on the pitch have come despite off-field disturbances.

The Indomitable Lions made sure of their place in Japan and Korea by beating **Togo** 2-0, a victory that lifted them out of reach of **Angola**. It has been an impressive march by the reigning African champions, spurred on by the goals of Patrick Mboma and Samuel Eto'o and building on the confidence gained from the country's gold medal-winning performance at the Olympic Games in Sydney last year.

But the team have been through four coaching changes since the qualifying campaign began last July. Frenchman Pierre Lechantre was in charge for their first two matches but was then pushed aside to allow Jean-Paul Akono to take over in January.

Akono had been the coach of the victorious Olympic team and the move was seen as a populist effort on the part of Sports Minister Bidoung Mkpatt, who controls the team's budget.

But the fans never accepted Akono and even though his side won qualifying matches against Zambia and Libya at home, both performances were unimpressive and their own supporters jeered the team when they left the field in Yaounde.

Akono resigned in April, saying that Lechantre, who had been promoted to the post of technical director at the federation, had been orchestrating a campaign against him.

Lechantre was brought back but lasted just one month after the team performed badly at the Confederations Cup in Japan in June.

He was replaced by inexperienced compatriot Robert Corfou, who was in charge for just one game.

These kinds of problems are nothing new to Cameroon and the players seem to be able to get on with their task despite the backroom uncertainty. Mboma, the African Footballer of the Year, will be their key figure next year, but it is defensively where they need a lot more attention. Rigobert Song of West Ham is the pillar at the back but is prone to eccentricity.

South Africa qualified for their second successive finals, cruising to top place in Group E. But their campaign was overshadowed by tragedy and undoubtedly aided by the expulsion of Guinea.

A riot during Bafana Bafana's first second round qualifier, away to Zimbabwe in Harare, led to a stampede in which 13 people died and the abandonment of the game.

The unrest on the terraces was sparked when South African winger Delron Buckley scored his second goal of the match with eight minutes remaining. With the tie apparently lost, the home fans rioted, police fired teargas in an attempt to quell the trouble and the tragic stampede ensued.

Despite the match abandonment, FIFA allowed the score to stand, and from that point on South Africa never looked back, making sure of their finals place with a 1-1 draw in **Burkina**

Faso in their penultimate qualifier.

But they would be the first to admit that there was a big dose of good fortune for them when Guinea were expelled from the qualifiers after their government fired the football federation and then refused to reinstate them as FIFA demanded.

The West Africans had looked to be tough opposition for Bafana Bafana, but their early expulsion meant the two countries never met, leaving South Africa facing only mediocre opposition.

In fact, Portuguese coach Carlos Queiroz faced more problems from his own team than the group opponents, with captain Lucas Radebe and fellow defender Mark Fish opting out of key matches to concentrate on their career with their clubs in England.

The South African FA, realising the importance of the players' club careers in Europe, has tried to accommodate their wishes as much as possible, but a crunch is sure to come next year with the African Nations Cup finals in Mali and then an intensive preparatory programme planned before the trip to Asia for the World Cup finals.

Mark Gleeson

5 teams qualify

FIRST ROUND

07.04.00.....Djibouti-DR Congo 1-1
23.04.00.....DR Congo-Djibouti 9-1
.....*DR Congo 10-2 on agg*
07.04.00.....Mauritania-Tunisia 1-2
22.04.00.....Tunisia-Mauritania 3-0
.....*Tunisia 5-1 on agg*
08.04.00.....Botswana-Zambia 0-1
22.04.00.....Zambia-Botswana 1-0
.....*Zambia 2-0 on agg*
08.04.00.....Guinea-Bissau-Togo 0-0
23.04.00.....Togo-Guinea-Bissau 3-0
.....*Togo 3-0 on agg*
08.04.00.....Madagascar-Gabon 2-0
22.04.00.....Gabon-Madagascar 1-0
.....*Madagascar 2-1 on agg*
08.04.00.....Malawi-Kenya.....2-0
22.04.00.....Kenya-Malawi.....0-0
.....*2nd leg abandoned after 88mins – .....*
.....*result stood. Malawi 2-0 on agg*
08.04.00.....Sao Tome e Principe-Sierra Leone .2-0
22.04.00.....Sierra Leone-Sao Tome e Principe .4-0
.....*Sierra Leone 4-2 on agg*
08.04.00.....Seychelles-Namibia.....1-1
22.04.00.....Namibia-Seychelles.....3-0
.....*Namibia 4-1 on agg*
08.04.00.....Tanzania-Ghana 0-1
23.04.00.....Ghana-Tanzania 3-2
.....*Ghana 4-2 on agg*
08.04.00.....Uganda-Guinea.....4-4
23.04.00.....Guinea-Uganda.....3-0
.....*Guinea 7-4 on agg*
09.04.00.....Benin-Senegal.....1-1
23.04.00.....Senegal-Benin.....1-0
.....*Senegal 2-1 on agg*
09.04.00.....Cape Verde Islands-Algeria 0-0
21.04.00.....Algeria-Cape Verde Islands 2-0
.....*Algeria 2-0 on agg*
09.04.00.....Central African Rep-Zimbabwe 0-1
23.04.00.....Zimbabwe-Central African Rep 3-1
.....*Zimbabwe 4-1 on agg*
09.04.00.....Chad-Liberia 0-1
23.04.00.....Liberia-Chad 0-0
.....*Liberia 1-0 on agg*
09.04.00.....Equatorial Guinea-Congo.....1-3
23.04.00.....Congo-Equatorial Guinea.....2-1
.....*Congo 5-2 on agg*
09.04.00.....Eritrea-Nigeria.....0-0
22.04.00.....Nigeria-Eritrea.....4-0
.....*Nigeria 4-0 on agg*
09.04.00.....Ethiopia-Burkina Faso 2-1
23.04.00.....Burkina Faso-Ethiopia 3-0
.....*Burkina Faso 4-2 on agg*
09.04.00.....Gambia-Morocco 0-1
22.04.00.....Morocco-Gambia 2-0
.....*Morocco 3-0 on agg*
09.04.00.....Lesotho-South Africa.....0-2
22.04.00.....South Africa-Lesotho.....1-0
.....*South Africa 3-0 on agg*
09.04.00.....Libya-Mali.....3-0
23.04.00.....Mali-Libya.....3-1
.....*Libya 4-3 on agg*
09.04.00.....Rwanda-Ivory Coast 2-2
23.04.00.....Ivory Coast-Rwanda 2-0
.....*Ivory Coast 4-2 on agg*
09.04.00.....Sudan-Mozambique 1-0
23.04.00.....Mozambique-Sudan 2-1
.....*Agg 2-2. Sudan on away goals*
09.04.00.....Swaziland-Angola.....0-1
23.04.00.....Angola-Swaziland.....7-1
.....*Angola 8-1 on agg*
19.04.00.....*Somalia-Cameroon 0-3
23.04.00.....Cameroon-Somalia.....3-0
.....*Cameroon 6-0 on agg*
20.04.00.....*Mauritius-Egypt 0-2
23.04.00.....Egypt-Mauritius 4-2
.....*Egypt 6-2 on agg*

Winners qualified for second round.
**Somalia and Mauritius forfeited the right to stage the first leg at home.*

SECOND ROUND

Group A

Angola, Cameroon, Libya, Togo, Zambia

18.06.00.....Angola-Zambia.....2-1
18.06.00.....Libya-Cameroon.....0-3
08.07.00.....Zambia-Togo.....2-0
09.07.00.....Cameroon-Angola.....3-0
28.01.01.....Angola-Libya 3-1
28.01.01.....Togo-Cameroon 0-2
23.02.01.....Libya-Togo 3-3
25.02.01.....Cameroon-Zambia 1-0
10.03.01.....Zambia-Libya 2-0
11.03.01.....Togo-Angola.....1-1
21.04.01.....Zambia-Angola.....1-1
22.04.01.....Cameroon-Libya.....1-0
06.05.01.....Angola-Cameroon 2-0
06.05.01.....Togo-Zambia.....3-2
29.06.01.....Libya-Angola 1-1
01.07.01.....Cameron-Togo 2-0
14.07.01.....Zambia-Cameroon 2-2
15.07.01.....Togo-Libya 2-0
27.07.01.....Libya-Zambia
29.07.01.....Angola-Togo

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cameroon*	8	6	1	1	14	4	19
Angola	7	3	3	1	10	8	12
Zambia	7	2	2	3	10	9	8
Togo	7	2	2	3	9	12	8
Libya	7	0	2	5	5	15	2

Group B

Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sudan

17.06.00 .....Nigeria-Sierra Leone 2-0
18.06.00 .....Sudan-Liberia.....2-0
09.07.00 .....Ghana-Sierra Leone 5-0
09.07.00 .....Liberia-Nigeria 2-1
27.01.01 .....Nigeria-Sudan 3-0
28.01.01 .....Ghana-Liberia.....1-3
25.02.01 .....Liberia-Sierra Leone 1-0
25.02.01 .....Sudan-Ghana 1-0
09.03.01 .....Ghana-Nigeria 0-0
10.03.01 .....Sierra Leone-Sudan 0-2
21.04.01.....Sierra Leone-Nigeria 1-0
22.04.01.....Liberia-Sudan.....2-0
05.05.01.....Nigeria-Liberia 2-0
05.05.01.....Sierra Leone-Ghana 1-1
01.07.01.....Liberia-Ghana.....1-2
01.07.01.....Sudan-Nigeria 0-4
14.07.01.....Sierra Leone-Liberia.....0-1
15.07.01.....Ghana-Sudan 1-0
29.07.01.....Nigeria-Ghana
29.07.01.....Sudan-Sierra Leone

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liberia	8	5	0	3	10	8	15
Nigeria	7	4	1	2	12	3	13
Ghana	7	3	2	2	10	6	11
Sudan	7	3	0	4	5	10	9
Sierra Leone	7	1	1	5	2	12	4

Group C

Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Namibia, Senegal

16.06.00 .....Algeria-Senegal.....1-1
17.06.00 .....Namibia-Morocco.....0-0
09.07.00 .....Morocco-Algeria.....2-1
09.07.00 .....Senegal-Egypt 0-0
26.01.01 .....Algeria-Namibia 1-0
28.01.01 .....Egypt-Morocco 0-0
24.02.01 .....Morocco-Senegal 0-0
24.02.01 .....Namibia-Egypt.....1-1
10.03.01 .....Senegal-Namibia.....4-0
11.03.01 .....Egypt-Algeria.....5-2
21.04.01 .....Morocco-Namibia.....3-0
21.04.01 .....Senegal-Algeria.....3-0
04.05.01 .....Algeria-Morocco.....1-2
06.05.01 .....Egypt-Senegal 1-0
30.06.01 .....Morocco-Egypt 1-0
30.06.01 .....Namibia-Algeria 0-4
13.07.01 .....Egypt-Namibia.....8-2
14.07.01 .....Senegal-Morocco 1-0
21.07.01 .....Algeria-Egypt.....1-1
21.07.01 .....Namibia-Senegal.....0-5

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Senegal*	8	4	3	1	14	2	15
Morocco	8	4	3	1	8	3	15
Egypt	8	3	4	1	16	7	13
Algeria	8	2	2	4	11	14	8
Namibia	8	0	2	6	3	26	2

Group D

Congo, DR Congo, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Tunisia

18.06.00.....Ivory Coast-Tunisia 2-2
18.06.00.....Madagascar-DR Congo.....3-0
08.07.00 .....Tunisia-Madagascar 1-0
09.07.00 .....DR Congo-Congo 2-0
28.01.01 .....Congo-Tunisia 1-2
28.01.01 .....Madagascar-Ivory Coast 1-3
25.02.01 .....Tunisia-DR Congo 6-0
10.03.01 .....DR Congo-Ivory Coast 1-2
22.04.01 .....DR Congo-Madagascar 1-0
22.04.01 .....Ivory Coast-Congo.....2-0
27.04.01 .....Congo-Madagascar.....2-0
05.05.01 .....Madagascar-Tunisia 0-2
06.05.01 .....Congo-DR Congo 1-1
20.05.01 .....Tunisia-Ivory Coast 1-1
01.07.01 .....Ivory Coast-Madagascar 6-0
01.07.01 .....Tunisia-Congo 6-0
15.07.01 .....Congo-Ivory Coast.....1-1
15.07.01 .....DR Congo-Tunisia 0-3
28.07.01 .....Madagascar-Congo
29.07.01 .....Ivory Coast-DR Congo

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tunisia*	8	6	2	0	23	4	20
Ivory Coast	7	4	3	0	17	6	15
DR Congo	7	2	1	4	5	15	7
Congo	7	1	2	4	5	14	5
Madagascar	7	1	0	6	4	15	3

Group E

Burkina Faso, Guinea (expelled), Malawi, South Africa, Zimbabwe

17.06.00.....Malawi-Burkina Faso.....1-1
18.06.00.....Guinea-Zimbabwe .....(annulled) 3-0
09.07.00.....Burkina Faso-Guinea .....(annulled) 2-3
09.07.00.....Zimbabwe-South Africa**.....0-2
27.01.01.....South Africa-Burkina Faso.....1-0
28.01.01.....Guinea-Malawi.....(annulled) 1-1
24.02.01.....Burkina Faso-Zimbabwe 1-2
25.02.01.....Malawi-South Africa 1-2
11.03.01.....Zimbabwe-Malawi 2-0
21.04.01.....Burkina Faso-Malawi.....4-2
05.05.01.....South Africa-Zimbabwe.....2-1
01.07.01.....Burkina Faso-South Africa.....1-1
14.07.01.....South Africa-Malawi 2-0
15.07.01.....Zimbabwe-Burkina Faso 1-0
28.07.01.....Malawi-Zimbabwe
***Match abandoned after 82 minutes; result stood*

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Africa*	6	5	1	0	10	3	16
Zimbabwe	5	3	0	2	6	5	9
Burkina Faso	6	1	2	3	7	8	5
Malawi	5	0	1	4	4	11	1

Guinea expelled; results expunged

The five group winners qualify for the finals.

**Qualified for the finals.*

ASIA

2 or 3 teams qualify, plus co-hosts Japan and South Korea

FIRST ROUND

Group 1

Laos, Oman, Philippines, Syria

30.04.01.....Oman-Laos 12-0
30.04.01.....Syria-Philippines 12-0
04.05.01.....Laos-Oman*.....0-7
04.05.01.....Philippines-Syria 1-5
07.05.01.....Oman-Philippines 7-0
07.05.01.....Syria-Laos 11-0
11.05.01.....Laos-Syria** 0-9
11.05.01.....Philippines-Oman*.....0-2
18.05.01.....Syria-Oman 3-3
19.05.01.....Laos-Philippines.....2-0
25.05.01.....Oman-Syria 2-0
26.05.01.....Philippines-Laos.....1-1
Ties played on a home and away basis
**Played in Muscat; Laos and Philippines waived right to stage game. **Played in Aleppo; Laos waived right to stage game*

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Oman*	6	5	1	0	33	3	16
Syria	6	4	1	1	40	6	13
Laos	6	1	1	4	3	40	4
Philippines	6	0	1	5	2	29	1

Group 2

Guam, Iran, Myanmar (withdrew), Tajikistan

24.11.00.....Iran-Guam 19-0
26.11.00.....Tajikistan-Guam 16-0
28.11.00.....Iran-Tajikistan 2-0
All ties played in Tabriz, Iran

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Iran*	2	2	0	0	21	0	6
Tajikistan	2	1	0	1	16	2	3
Guam	2	0	0	2	0	35	0

Group 3

Hong Kong, Malaysia, Palestine, Qatar

04.03.01.....Qatar-Malaysia 5-1
04.03.01.....Hong Kong-Palestine.....1-1
08.03.01.....Palestine-Qatar.....1-2
08.03.01.....Malaysia-Hong Kong 2-0
11.03.01.....Palestine-Malaysia 1-0
11.03.01.....Qatar-Hong Kong.....2-0
Ties played in Hong Kong

20.03.01.....Palestine-Hong Kong.....1-0
20.03.01.....Malaysia-Qatar 0-0
23.03.01.....Qatar-Palestine.....2-1
23.03.01.....Hong Kong-Malaysia 2-1
25.03.01.....Hong Kong-Qatar.....0-3
25.03.01.....Malaysia-Palestine 4-3
Ties played in Doha, Qatar

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Qatar*	6	5	1	0	14	3	16
Palestine	6	2	1	3	8	9	7
Malaysia	6	2	1	3	8	11	7
Hong Kong	6	1	1	4	3	10	4

Group 4

Bahrain, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Singapore

03.02.01.....Bahrain-Kuwait.....1-2
03.02.01.....Singapore-Kyrgyzstan 0-1
06.02.01.....Bahrain-Kyrgyzstan 1-0
06.02.01.....Kuwait-Singapore.....1-1
09.02.01.....Kyrgyzstan-Kuwait 0-3
09.02.01.....Singapore-Bahrain 1-2
Ties played in Singapore

21.02.01.....Kyrgyzstan-Bahrain.....1-2
21.02.01.....Singapore-Kuwait.....0-1
24.02.01.....Kuwait-Kyrgyzstan 2-0
24.02.01.....Bahrain-Singapore 2-0
27.02.01.....Kyrgyzstan-Singapore 1-1
27.02.01.....Kuwait-Bahrain.....0-1
Ties played in Kuwait City

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bahrain*	6	5	0	1	9	4	15
Kuwait	6	4	1	1	9	3	13
Kyrgyzstan	6	1	1	4	3	9	4
Singapore	6	0	2	4	3	8	2

Group 5

Lebanon, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand

13.05.01.....Thailand-Sri Lanka 4-2
13.05.01.....Lebanon-Pakistan.....6-0
15.05.01.....Thailand-Pakistan.....3-0
15.05.01.....Lebanon-Sri Lanka 4-0
17.05.01.....Pakistan-Sri Lanka 3-3
17.05.01.....Lebanon-Thailand.....1-2
Ties played in Beirut, Lebanon

26.05.01.....Pakistan-Lebanon.....1-8
26.05.01.....Sri Lanka-Thailand 0-3
28.05.01.....Sri Lanka-Lebanon 0-5
28.05.01.....Pakistan-Thailand.....0-6
30.05.01.....Sri Lanka-Pakistan 3-1
30.05.01.....Thailand-Lebanon.....2-2
Ties played in Bangkok, Thailand

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Thailand*	6	5	1	0	20	5	16
Lebanon	6	4	1	1	26	5	13
Sri Lanka	6	1	1	4	8	20	4
Pakistan	6	0	1	5	5	29	1

Group 6

Iraq, Kazakhstan, Macao, Nepal

12.04.01.....Nepal-Kazakhstan 0-6
12.04.01.....Iraq-Macao 8-0
14.04.01.....Kazakhstan-Macao.....3-0
14.04.01.....Nepal-Iraq.....1-9
16.04.01.....Nepal-Macao 4-1
16.04.01.....Kazakhstan-Iraq 1-1
Ties played in Baghdad, Iraq

21.04.01.....Kazakhstan-Nepal 4-0
21.04.01.....Macao-Iraq 0-5
23.04.01.....Macao-Kazakhstan.....0-5
23.04.01.....Iraq-Nepal.....4-2
25.04.01.....Macao-Nepal 1-6
25.04.01.....Iraq-Kazakhstan 1-1
Ties played in Almaty, Kazakhstan

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Iraq*	6	4	2	0	28	5	14
Kazakhstan	6	4	2	0	20	2	14
Nepal	6	2	0	4	13	25	6
Macao	6	0	0	6	2	31	0

Group 7

Uzbekistan, Jordan, Turkmenistan, Taiwan

23.04.01.....Turkmenistan-Jordan.....2-0
23.04.01.....Uzbekistan-Taiwan.....7-0
25.04.01.....Taiwan-Jordan 0-2
25.04.01.....Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan 1-0
27.04.01.....Taiwan-Turkmenistan 0-5
27.04.01.....Uzbekistan-Jordan 2-2
Ties played in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

03.05.01.....Jordan-Taiwan 6-0
03.05.01.....Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan 2-5
05.05.01.....Taiwan-Uzbekistan.....0-4
05.05.01.....Jordan-Turkmenistan.....1-2
07.05.01.....Turkmenistan-Taiwan 1-0
07.05.01.....Jordan-Uzbekistan 1-1
Ties played in Amman, Jordan

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Uzbekistan*	6	4	2	0	20	5	14
Turkmenistan	6	4	0	2	12	7	12
Jordan	6	2	2	2	12	7	8
Taiwan	6	0	0	6	0	25	0

Group 8

Brunei, India, United Arab Emirates, Yemen

07.04.01.....Brunei-Yemen.....0-5
08.04.01.....India-United Arab Emirates 1-0
14.04.01.....Brunei-United Arab Emirates.....0-12
15.04.01.....India-Yemen 1-1
26.04.01.....United Arab Emirates-India 1-0
27.04.01.....Yemen-Brunei.....1-0
04.05.01.....United Arab Emirates-Brunei.....4-0
04.05.01.....Yemen-India 3-3
11.05.01.....Yemen-United Arab Emirates 2-1
12.05.01.....Brunei-India.....0-1
18.05.01.....United Arab Emirates-Yemen 3-2
20.05.01.....India-Brunei.....5-0
Ties played on a home and away basis

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
UAE*	6	4	0	2	21	5	12
Yemen	6	3	2	1	14	8	11
India	6	3	2	1	11	5	11
Brunei	6	0	0	6	0	28	0

Group 9

Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Maldives

01.04.01.....Maldives-Cambodia.....6-0
08.04.01.....Indonesia-Maldives 5-0
15.04.01.....Cambodia-Maldives.....1-1
22.04.01.....China-Maldives.....10-1
22.04.01.....Indonesia-Cambodia.....6-0
28.04.01.....Maldives-China.....0-1
29.04.01.....Cambodia-Indonesia.....0-2
06.05.01.....Cambodia-China 0-4
06.05.01.....Maldives-Indonesia 0-2
13.05.01.....China-Indonesia 5-1
20.05.01.....China-Cambodia 3-1
27.05.01.....Indonesia-China 0-2
Ties played on a home and away basis

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
China*	6	6	0	0	25	3	18
Indonesia	6	4	0	2	16	7	12
Maldives	6	1	1	4	8	19	4
Cambodia	6	0	1	5	2	22	1

Group 10

Bangladesh, Mongolia, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam

08.02.01.....Vietnam-Bangladesh 0-0
08.02.01.....Saudi Arabia-Mongolia.....6-0
10.02.01.....Mongolia-Vietnam 0-1
10.02.01.....Bangladesh-Saudi Arabia 0-3
12.02.01.....Mongolia-Bangladesh 0-3
12.02.01.....Saudi Arabia-Vietnam.....5-0
15.02.01.....Mongolia-Saudi Arabia 0-6
15.02.01.....Bangladesh-Vietnam 0-4
17.02.01.....Vietnam-Mongolia 4-0
17.02.01.....Saudi Arabia-Bangladesh.....6-0
19.02.01.....Bangladesh-Mongolia 2-2
19.02.01.....Vietnam-Saudi Arabia.....0-4
All ties played in Dammam, Saudi Arabia

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Saudi Arabia*	6	6	0	0	30	0	18
Vietnam	6	3	1	2	9	9	10
Bangladesh	6	1	2	3	5	15	5
Mongolia	6	0	1	5	2	22	1

**Qualified for second round.*

SECOND ROUND

Group A

Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Thailand

17.08.01.....Iraq-Thailand
17.08.01.....Saudi Arabia-Bahrain
23.08.01.....Bahrain-Iraq
24.08.01.....Iran-Saudi Arabia
31.08.01.....Saudi Arabia-Iraq
01.09.01.....Thailand-Iran
06.09.01.....Bahrain-Thailand
07.09.01.....Iraq-Iran
14.09.01.....Iran-Bahrain
15.09.01.....Thailand-Saudi Arabia
21.09.01.....Bahrain-Saudi Arabia
22.09.01.....Thailand-Iraq
28.09.01.....Iraq-Bahrain
28.09.01.....Saudi Arabia-Iran
05.10.01.....Iran-Thailand
05.10.01.....Iraq-Saudi Arabia
12.10.01.....Iran-Iraq
13.10.01.....Thailand-Bahrain
19.10.01.....Bahrain-Iran
19.10.01.....Saudi Arabia-Thailand

Group B

China, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan

16.08.01.....Qatar-Oman
17.08.01.....United Arab Emirates-Uzbekistan
25.08.01.....China-United Arab Emirates
26.08.01.....Uzbekistan-Qatar
31.08.01.....United Arab Emirates-Qatar
31.08.01.....Oman-China
07.09.01.....Qatar-China
08.09.01.....Uzbekistan-Oman
14.09.01.....Oman-United Arab Emirates
15.09.01.....China-Uzbekistan
21.09.01.....Oman-Qatar
22.09.01.....Uzbekistan-United Arab Emirates
27.09.01.....United Arab Emirates-China
28.09.01.....Qatar-Uzbekistan
04.10.01.....Qatar-United Arab Emirates
07.10.01.....China-Oman
13.10.01.....Oman-Uzbekistan
13.10.01.....China-Qatar
19.10.01.....United Arab Emirates-Oman
19.10.01.....Uzbekistan-China

Ties to be played on a home and away basis. The two group winners qualify directly for the finals. The two runners-up play-off home and away, the winners going on to meet a European group runner-up in a play-off. The winners of that tie also qualify for the finals.

EUROPE

13 or 14 teams qualify, plus holders France

Group 1

Faroe Islands, Luxembourg, Russia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Yugoslavia

02.09.00.....Switzerland-Russia 0-1
03.09.00.....Faroe Islands-Slovenia.....2-2
03.09.00.....Luxembourg-Yugoslavia.....0-2
07.10.00.....Luxembourg-Slovenia 1-2
07.10.00.....Switzerland-Faroe Islands 5-1
07.10.00.....Yugoslavia-Russia .....Postponed
11.10.00.....Russia-Luxembourg 3-0
11.10.00.....Slovenia-Switzerland 2-2
11.10.00.....Yugoslavia-Faroe Islands...Postponed
24.03.01.....Luxembourg-Faroe Islands 0-2
24.03.01.....Russia-Slovenia.....1-1
24.03.01.....Yugoslavia-Switzerland.....1-1
28.03.01.....Russia-Faroe Islands.....1-0
28.03.01.....Slovenia-Yugoslavia 1-1
28.03.01.....Switzerland-Luxembourg.....5-0
25.04.01.....Yugoslavia-Russia 0-1
02.06.01.....Faroe Islands-Switzerland 0-1
02.06.01.....Russia-Yugoslavia 1-1
02.06.01.....Slovenia-Luxembourg 2-0
06.06.01.....Faroe Islands-Yugoslavia 0-6
06.06.01.....Luxembourg-Russia 1-2
06.06.01.....Switzerland-Slovenia 0-1
15.08.01.....Yugoslavia-Faroe Islands
01.09.01.....Faroe Islands-Luxembourg
01.09.01.....Slovenia-Russia
01.09.01.....Switzerland-Yugoslavia
05.09.01.....Faroe Islands-Russia
05.09.01.....Luxembourg-Switzerland
05.09.01.....Yugoslavia-Slovenia
06/07.10.01....Russia-Switzerland
06/07.10.01....Slovenia-Faroe Islands
06/07.10.01....Yugoslavia-Luxembourg

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Russia	7	5	2	0	10	3	17
Slovenia	7	3	4	0	11	7	13
Switzerland	7	3	2	2	14	6	11
Yugoslavia	6	2	3	1	11	4	9
Faroe Islands	6	1	1	4	5	15	4
Luxembourg	7	0	0	7	2	18	0

Group 2

Andorra, Cyprus, Estonia, Holland, Portugal, Republic of Ireland

16.08.00.....Estonia-Andorra.....1-0
02.09.00.....Andorra-Cyprus 2-3
02.09.00.....Holland-Rep of Ireland.....2-2
03.09.00.....Estonia-Portugal.....1-3
07.10.00.....Andorra-Estonia.....1-2
07.10.00.....Cyprus-Holland 0-4
07.10.00.....Portugal-Rep of Ireland 1-1
11.10.00.....Holland-Portugal.....0-2
11.10.00.....Rep of Ireland-Estonia 2-0
15.11.00.....Cyprus-Andorra 5-0
28.02.01.....Portugal-Andorra.....3-0
24.03.01.....Andorra-Holland 0-5
24.03.01.....Cyprus-Rep of Ireland.....0-4
28.03.01.....Andorra-Rep of Ireland 0-3
28.03.01.....Cyprus-Estonia 2-2
28.03.01.....Portugal-Holland.....2-2
25.04.01.....Holland-Cyprus.....4-0
25.04.01.....Rep of Ireland-Andorra.....3-1
02.06.01.....Estonia-Holland 2-4
02.06.01.....Rep of Ireland-Portugal 1-1
06.06.01.....Estonia-Rep of Ireland.....0-2
06.06.01.....Portugal-Cyprus.....6-0
15.08.01.....Estonia-Cyprus
01.09.01.....Andorra-Portugal
01.09.01.....Rep of Ireland-Holland
05.09.01.....Cyprus-Portugal
05.09.01.....Holland-Estonia
06.10.01.....Holland-Andorra
06.10.01.....Portugal-Estonia
06.10.01.....Rep of Ireland-Cyprus

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rep of Ireland	8	5	3	0	18	5	18
Portugal	7	4	3	0	18	5	15
Holland	7	4	2	1	21	8	14
Estonia	7	2	1	4	8	14	7
Cyprus	7	2	1	4	10	22	7
Andorra	8	0	0	8	4	25	0

Group 3

Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Iceland, Malta, Northern Ireland

02.09.00.....Bulgaria-Czech Republic 0-1
02.09.00.....Iceland-Denmark.....1-2
02.09.00.....Northern Ireland-Malta.....1-0
07.10.00.....Bulgaria-Malta.....3-0
07.10.00.....Czech Republic-Iceland.....4-0
07.10.00.....Northern Ireland-Denmark 1-1
11.10.00.....Denmark-Bulgaria 1-1
11.10.00.....Iceland-Northern Ireland 1-0
11.10.00.....Malta-Czech Republic 0-0
24.03.01.....Bulgaria-Iceland 2-1
24.03.01.....Malta-Denmark 0-5
24.03.01.....Northern Ireland-Czech Republic ...0-1
28.03.01.....Bulgaria-Northern Ireland.....4-3
28.03.01.....Czech Republic-Denmark.....0-0
25.04.01.....Malta-Iceland 1-4
02.06.01.....Denmark-Czech Republic.....2-1
02.06.01.....Iceland-Malta 3-0
02.06.01.....Northern Ireland-Bulgaria.....0-1
06.06.01.....Czech Republic-Northern Ireland ...3-1
06.06.01.....Denmark-Malta 2-1
06.06.01.....Iceland-Bulgaria 1-1
01.09.01.....Denmark-Northern Ireland
01.09.01.....Iceland-Czech Republic
01.09.01.....Malta-Bulgaria
05.09.01.....Bulgaria-Denmark
05.09.01.....Czech Republic-Malta
05.09.01.....Northern Ireland-Iceland
06.10.01.....Czech Republic-Bulgaria
06.10.01.....Denmark-Iceland
06.10.01.....Malta-Northern Ireland

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Denmark	7	4	3	0	13	5	15
Czech Republic	7	4	2	1	10	3	14
Bulgaria	7	4	2	1	12	7	14
Iceland	7	3	1	3	11	10	10
Northern Ireland	7	1	1	5	6	11	4
Malta	7	0	1	6	2	18	1

Group 4

Azerbaijan, Macedonia, Moldova, Slovakia, Sweden, Turkey

02.09.00 .....Azerbaijan-Sweden.....0-1
02.09.00 .....Turkey-Moldova 2-0
03.09.00 .....Slovakia-Macedonia 2-0
06.10.00 .....Macedonia-Azerbaijan 3-0
07.10.00 .....Moldova-Slovakia 0-1
07.10.00 .....Sweden-Turkey.....1-1
11.10.00 .....Azerbaijan-Turkey.....0-1
11.10.00 .....Moldova-Macedonia 0-0
11.10.00 .....Slovakia-Sweden 0-0
24.03.01 .....Azerbaijan-Moldova 0-0
24.03.01 .....Sweden-Macedonia 1-0
24.03.01 .....Turkey-Slovakia 1-1
28.03.01 .....Macedonia-Turkey 1-2
28.03.01 .....Moldova-Sweden 0-2
28.03.01 .....Slovakia-Azerbaijan 3-1
02.06.01 .....Macedonia-Moldova 2-2
02.06.01 .....Sweden-Slovakia 2-0
02.06.01 .....Turkey-Azerbaijan.....3-0
06.06.01 .....Azerbaijan-Slovakia 2-0
06.06.01 .....Sweden-Moldova 6-0
06.06.01 .....Turkey-Macedonia 3-3
01.09.01 .....Macedonia-Sweden
01.09.01 .....Moldova-Azerbaijan
01.09.01 .....Slovakia-Turkey
05.09.01 .....Azerbaijan-Macedonia
05.09.01 .....Slovakia-Moldova
05.09.01 .....Turkey-Sweden

07.10.01 .....Macedonia-Slovakia
07.10.01 .....Moldova-Turkey
07.10.01 .....Sweden-Azerbaijan

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sweden	7	5	2	0	13	1	17
Turkey	7	4	3	0	13	6	15
Slovakia	7	3	2	2	7	6	11
Macedonia	7	1	3	3	9	10	6
Azerbaijan	7	1	1	5	3	11	4
Moldova	7	0	3	4	2	13	3

Group 5

Armenia, Belarus, Norway, Poland, Ukraine, Wales

02.09.00 .....Belarus-Wales.....2-1
02.09.00 .....Norway-Armenia.....0-0
02.09.00 .....Ukraine-Poland.....1-3
07.10.00 .....Armenia-Ukraine.....2-3
07.10.00 .....Poland-Belarus.....3-1
07.10.00 .....Wales-Norway.....1-1
11.10.00 .....Belarus-Armenia.....2-1
11.10.00 .....Norway-Ukraine.....0-1
11.10.00 .....Poland-Wales.....0-0
24.03.01 .....Armenia-Wales.....2-2
24.03.01 .....Norway-Poland.....2-3
24.03.01 .....Ukraine-Belarus.....0-0
28.03.01 .....Belarus-Norway.....2-1
28.03.01 .....Poland-Armenia.....4-0
28.03.01 .....Wales-Ukraine.....1-1
02.06.01 .....Armenia-Belarus.....0-0
02.06.01 .....Ukraine-Norway.....0-0
02.06.01 .....Wales-Poland.....1-2
06.06.01 .....Armenia-Poland.....1-1
06.06.01 .....Norway-Belarus.....1-1
06.06.01 .....Ukraine-Wales.....1-1
01.09.01 .....Belarus-Ukraine
01.09.01 .....Poland-Norway
01.09.01 .....Wales-Armenia
05.09.01 .....Belarus-Poland
05.09.01 .....Norway-Wales
05.09.01 .....Ukraine-Armenia
06.10.01 .....Armenia-Norway
06.10.01 .....Poland-Ukraine
06.10.01 .....Wales-Belarus

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Poland	7	5	2	0	16	6	17
Belarus	7	3	3	1	8	7	12
Ukraine	7	2	4	1	7	7	10
Wales	7	0	5	2	7	9	5
Norway	7	0	4	3	5	8	4
Armenia	7	0	4	3	6	12	4

Group 6

Belgium, Croatia, Latvia, San Marino, Scotland

02.09.00.....Belgium-Croatia.....0-0
02.09.00.....Latvia-Scotland.....0-1
07.10.00.....Latvia-Belgium.....0-4
07.10.00.....San Marino-Scotland.....0-2
11.10.00.....Croatia-Scotland.....1-1
15.11.00.....San Marino-Latvia.....0-1
28.02.01.....Belgium-San Marino.....10-1
24.03.01.....Croatia-Latvia.....4-1
24.03.01.....Scotland-Belgium.....2-2
28.03.01.....Scotland-San Marino.....4-0
25.04.01.....Latvia-San Marino.....1-1
02.06.01.....Belgium-Latvia.....3-1
02.06.01.....Croatia-San Marino.....4-0
06.06.01.....Latvia-Croatia.....0-1
06.06.01.....San Marino-Belgium.....1-4
01.09.01.....Scotland-Croatia
05.09.01.....Belgium-Scotland
05.09.01.....San Marino-Croatia
06.10.01.....Croatia-Belgium
06.10.01.....Scotland-Latvia

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Belgium	6	4	2	0	23	5	14
Croatia	5	3	2	0	10	2	11
Scotland	5	3	2	0	10	3	11
Latvia	7	1	1	5	4	14	4
San Marino	7	0	1	6	3	26	1

Group 7

Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Israel, Liechtenstein, Spain

02.09.00 .....Bosnia-Herzegovina-Spain.....1-2
03.09.00 .....Israel-Liechtenstein.....2-0
07.10.00 .....Liechtenstein-Austria.....0-1
07.10.00 .....Spain-Israel.....2-0
11.10.00 .....Austria-Spain.....1-1
11.10.00 .....Israel-Bosnia-Herzegovina.....3-1
24.03.01 .....Bosnia-Herzegovina-Austria.....1-1
24.03.01 .....Spain-Liechtenstein.....5-0
28.03.01 .....Austria-Israel.....2-1
28.03.01 .....Liechtenstein-Bosnia-Herz.....0-3
25.04.01 .....Austria-Liechtenstein.....2-0
02.06.01 .....Liechtenstein-Israel.....0-3
02.06.01 .....Spain-Bosnia-Herzegovina.....4-1
06.06.01 .....Israel-Spain.....1-1
01.09.01 .....Bosnia-Herzegovina-Israel
01.09.01 .....Spain-Austria
05.09.01 .....Austria-Bosnia-Herzegovina
05.09.01 .....Liechtenstein-Spain
07.10.01 .....Bosnia-Herz-Liechtenstein
07.10.01 .....Israel-Austria

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain	6	4	2	0	15	4	14
Austria	5	3	2	0	7	3	11
Israel	6	3	1	2	10	6	10
Bosnia-Herz	5	1	1	3	7	10	4
Liechtenstein	6	0	0	6	0	16	0

Group 8

Georgia, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Romania

03.09.00 .....Hungary-Italy.....2-2
03.09.00 .....Romania-Lithuania.....1-0
07.10.00 .....Italy-Romania.....3-0
07.10.00 .....Lithuania-Georgia.....0-4
11.10.00 .....Italy-Georgia.....2-0
11.10.00 .....Lithuania-Hungary.....1-6
24.03.01 .....Hungary-Lithuania.....1-1
24.03.01 .....Romania-Italy.....0-2
28.03.01 .....Georgia-Romania.....0-2
28.03.01 .....Italy-Lithuania.....4-0
02.06.01 .....Georgia-Italy.....1-2
02.06.01 .....Romania-Hungary.....2-0
06.06.01 .....Hungary-Georgia.....4-1
06.06.01 .....Lithuania-Romania.....1-2
01.09.01 .....Georgia-Hungary
01.09.01 .....Lithuania-Italy
05.09.01 .....Georgia-Lithuania
05.09.01 .....Hungary-Romania
06.10.01 .....Italy-Hungary
06.10.01 .....Romania-Georgia

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Italy	6	5	1	0	15	3	16
Romania	6	4	0	2	7	6	12
Hungary	5	2	2	1	13	7	8
Georgia	5	1	0	4	6	10	3
Lithuania	6	0	1	5	3	18	1

Group 9

Albania, England, Finland, Germany, Greece

02.09.00.....Finland-Albania.....2-1
02.09.00.....Germany-Greece.....2-0
07.10.00.....England-Germany.....0-1
07.10.00.....Greece-Finland.....1-0
11.10.00.....Albania-Greece.....2-0
11.10.00.....Finland-England.....0-0
24.03.01.....England-Finland.....2-1
24.03.01.....Germany-Albania.....2-1
28.03.01.....Albania-England.....1-3
28.03.01.....Greece-Germany.....2-4
02.06.01.....Finland-Germany.....2-2
02.06.01.....Greece-Albania.....1-0
06.06.01.....Albania-Germany.....0-2
06.06.01.....Greece-England.....0-2
01.09.01.....Albania-Finland
01.09.01.....Germany-England
05.09.01.....England-Albania
05.09.01.....Finland-Greece
06.10.01.....England-Greece
06.10.01.....Germany-Finland

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Germany	6	5	1	0	13	5	16
England	5	3	1	1	7	3	10
Greece	6	2	0	4	4	10	6
Finland	5	1	2	2	5	6	5
Albania	6	1	0	5	5	10	3

Group winners qualify automatically for the finals. The nine group runners-up and the third-placed Asian team will be drawn in five head-to-head ties, the winners of which also qualify for the finals.

THE FOOTBALL CONFEDERATION

Arena: 'We can only improve on last time'

With World Cup qualification well within reach, the United States coach talks to Paul Gardner about his team's prospects at the finals

IF THE saying that you're only as good as your last game is true, then the USA are in trouble.

"We were terrible," says coach Bruce Arena, commenting on the 1-0 defeat by Mexico in the Azteca stadium in early July. "I was very disappointed at the way we came out for that game, the team wasn't ready."

Any reason for that? After all, the USA went into the game unbeaten in the Final qualifying group, with a record of four wins and a draw. "Yes – coaching. I have to accept responsibility; it's the coach's job to get the team ready for a game like that. Our record so far is that the players have won four games, the coaches have lost one."

Whatever, the truth is that the USA are not in trouble. After six games they are sitting pretty at the top of the six-team group, tied with Costa Rica. Thirteen points are in the bag, only two goals have been conceded and the USA are a pretty safe bet for a place in the 2002 World Cup finals.

In fact, what looked like being a perilous obstacle course has turned into something of a stroll. Arena demurs: "It's a difficult group. I'd challenge any European team to play in central America – the conditions are a great equaliser. Mexico are always difficult in Mexico. Jamaica at home have proved pretty well unbeatable. Costa Rica are a very good team. I think 16 or 17 points are the minimum for qualification – so mathematically we're in good shape."

A straightforward run in the qualifiers, then, but what happens in Japan/Korea? Weighing heavily on American minds is that 32nd-place finish out of 32 teams at France 98.

Arena emits a grunty sort of laugh: "So if we finish 31st we've improved. We want to do better, and we've got a lot of room to improve. We're setting no outrageous goals – the second round would be a big plus for US soccer."

Might that depend on the luck of the draw? Apparently not. "I don't really care about the group we're in – they're generally pretty balanced," says Arena. "You're gonna have a European country, maybe a South American. We have 11 players,

Sitting pretty...Arena's team are well-placed for World Cup qualification

they'll have 11. The world of soccer has shrunk considerably – everyone knows each other, the game is not a whole lot different. To rely on getting a good draw, that's a bunch of baloney."

Arena's US team have shown consistency only in their results. No style has been developed, and the line-ups have undergone repeated changes. A long sigh from Arena – the standard sigh from all World Cup coaches – precedes his explanation of the standard problems: injuries and call-up wrangles.

"Injuries and absences are all part of it. I imagine that's the case with other countries – but there's not been a whole lot of continuity. At the back, yes – Carlos Llamosa and Jeff Agoos have played regularly, and we've only needed six players for the four positions.

"Kasey Keller is certainly our number one keeper at this point. Defensively, we're strong, and the midfield is solid."

The US midfield features the lone US player who could arguably be tagged as world-class: captain Claudio Reyna. Arena is quick to play down the importance of the captaincy, saying: "It's very much over-rated. All 11 players on the field are captains. Claudio's not a very vocal player, but he trains hard and is very serious about his commitment to the national team. He's a quality player who can play with most national teams in the world.

"He makes us a better team – when he's there our guys are more confident. He's not a goal scorer but he creates chances with his passing; he makes Earnie Stewart a more dangerous player. Any time Reyna, Stewart and Chris Armas are together, we're in good shape."

Injuries have caused serious problems up front. Just as two young newcomers – Clint Mathis and Josh Wolff – were beginning to show exceptional form, both sustained long-term injuries playing for their MLS clubs. Brian McBride, who scored the USA's lone goal at France 98, has also been injured.

Arena has had to juggle different forward pairings, without much success. "At this point I thought we would have matured more with our new group of forwards," he says. "It's been a bit of a mess, and this area is not a strength of ours.

"When we play well – and we've done that at home, we deserved our three wins – we're pretty good with the ball. But we don't score a whole lot of goals."

Something of an understatement, that. The USA's average in their six Final qualifying group ties to date is only fractionally more than one goal a game – and one of the total of seven, the goal that beat Costa Rica, came after an almost comically flagrant handball was somehow not spotted by the referee.

The aim now is to ensure qualification, then work for the next eight months on getting better. Both can be accomplished, says Arena.

What sort of improvements does he have in mind? "When we get our full team together, we have decent depth, but I want to get a little more speed. We can develop a couple of guys to that role, to come on when the game has slowed down at the end. I want to have that as an option."

For overseas players, the important thing is that they be playing regularly. "Playing for an MLS team is better than sitting on the bench at Real Madrid," says Arena.

Not good news for forward Jovan Kirovski, who has so far failed to pin down a starting role with Sporting Lisbon. Midfielder John O'Brien is in the same boat at Ajax, where he has to regain a starting place lost when he suffered an Achilles injury playing for the USA at the 2000 Olympics.

Arena says it's too early to say what his ideal line-up will look like. At the moment he feels that only four players have guaranteed places: Reyna, Agoos, Stewart and Keller.

Truth be told, the 2002 World Cup has come at a frustratingly inconvenient time for the coach. "If the World Cup were in 2003, we'd have some new faces," he explains. "That's where the real story is for the USA, down the road. We've a bunch of young players who are going to be good."

Arena has already had four of them on the team or into training camp: Landon Donovan (San Jose Earthquakes, age 19), DaMarcus Beasley (Chicago Fire, 18), Bobby Convey (DC United, 18), and Santino Quaranta (DC United, 16).

"Donovan's a little ahead of the others," says Arena. "He's a forward or an attacking midfielder, a terrific passer, with outstanding running off the ball. He hasn't been called up so far because I thought it was more important for him to be with the Under-20 team at the World Cup in Argentina. But he's a good one, no question about it.

"Beasley is a very smart soccer player, very responsible defensively, good going forward. He needs to work on his crossing and finishing.

"Convey can play in the middle of midfield or an outside position. He could fit into a playmaking role – he's a good passer, sees things early, and is a pretty good finisher.

One for the future...Landon Donovan is the USA's brightest hope

"I haven't seen a great deal of Quaranta, but he has tremendous potential, just great promise. He already has the strength of a 25-year-old and he strikes the ball well with both feet.

"An impressive thing about these young players, one thing they have that is lacking in some of our older players, is that they're keen to attack opposing players, to take them on. They're not afraid to fail."

Nor is failure a word that has ever been associated with Arena's coaching career: five division one college titles with the University of Virginia, two MLS championships with DC United, and now easing the USA into an early qualification for Japan/Korea.

Costa Rica coming good

IF YOU'RE looking for a lousy way to start your World Cup qualifying run, losing to Barbados rates pretty highly. And that's just what Costa Rica did in July 2000.

Barbados went on to lose all their remaining five Semi-final round ties, while Costa Rica stumbled and clawed their way into a play-off with Guatemala for entry into the Final qualifying group.

In the meantime, Brazilian Gilson Nunez – who got the job as Costa Rica coach on Joao Havelange's recommendation – had been fired. This was not altogether surprising given the mediocre results and Nunez's famous statement that he didn't know anything about Costa Rican soccer.

He was replaced by his assistant, Alexander Guimaraes, a rather different Brazilian who had grown up in Costa Rica and had already coached the national Under-23 team.

The senior side began to find their feet after Guimaraes took over, hammering Guatemala 5-2 in the play-off, and now topping the Final round group on goals scored from the United States after six games.

If Costa Rica qualify for Japan/Korea, as seems likely given that the top three go through, they will be appearing at their second finals. Their debut came at Italia 90, under Bora Milutinovic, when they proved the worth of their players by beating both Scotland and Sweden and advancing to the second round.

From the depths of losing to Barbados, Costa Rica have soared to the heights of beating Mexico in the Azteca – the first time the Mexicans had ever been defeated in a competitive game at the stadium.

There's no doubt about the star of the team – the lanky Manchester City forward Paulo Wanchope, with his speed and his unorthodox dribbling. In goal, Erick Lonnis has proved equally eccentric, and equally effective – making a number of well-timed saves with his feet.

Captain Gilberto Martinez has been

the defensive stalwart, ably supported by Reynaldo Parks and Jervis Drummond. This trio may lack height but they have pace, good anticipation and know how to play the ball accurately up to the midfield. There, a fine balance between graft and skill has been achieved, with the work coming from Mauricio Solis and Ronald Gomez, and the skill from Roy Myers and Wilmer Lopez.

Up front, Wanchope's preferred partner is the powerful and skilful Rolando Fonseca, with left-footed Jafet Soto as an alternative. And Hernan Medford – a veteran of the Italia 90 team – is still a dangerous sub. He it was who scored the winning goal against Mexico in the Azteca.

Foreign experience has been a great help to the team's development – more than half of the regular starting XI are with overseas clubs – but the bench is something of a question mark. Not because of skill – youngsters like William Sunsing, Carlos Castro and Steven Bryce have that in abundance – but international inexperience.

Costa Rica still have some difficult games to play – home ties against Mexico and the USA, and a trip to Jamaica. But that win in the Azteca has imbued the side with a firm belief in their ability to qualify for Japan/Korea.

Paul Gardner

Main man...Wanchope (right)

3 teams qualify

PRELIMINARY PHASE

Central American Zone Group A

Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala

05.03.00 .....El Salvador-Belize 5-0
19.03.00 .....*Belize-Guatemala 1-2
02.04.00 .....Guatemala-El Salvador.....0-1
16.04.00 .....Belize-El Salvador 1-3
07.05.00 .....El Salvador-Guatemala.....1-1
20.05.00 .....**Guatemala-Belize 0-0
**In Panama City*
***In Tegucigalpa, Honduras*

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
El Salvador	4	3	1	0	10	2	10
Guatemala	4	1	2	1	3	3	5
Belize	4	0	1	3	2	10	1

Central American Zone Group B

Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama

04.03.00 .....Honduras-Nicaragua 3-0
19.03.00 .....Nicaragua-Panama 0-2
02.04.00 .....Panama-Honduras 1-0
16.04.00 .....Nicaragua-Honduras 0-1
07.05.00 .....Honduras-Panama 3-1
21.05.00 .....Panama-Nicaragua 4-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Panama	4	3	0	1	8	3	9
Honduras	4	3	0	1	7	2	9
Nicaragua	4	0	0	4	0	10	0

Group winners qualified for the overall confederation Semi-Final round. Group A runners-up played off against Caribbean Zone Group 2 runners-up for a Semi-Final round place; Group B runners-up played off against Caribbean Zone Group 3 runners-up for a Semi-Final round place.

Caribbean Zone first round

Group 1

05.03.00.....Cuba-Cayman Islands.....4-0
19.03.00.....Cayman Islands-Cuba.....0-0
.....*Cuba 4-0 on agg*
05.03.00.....St Lucia-Surinam.....1-0
19.03.00.....Surinam-St Lucia .....(aet) 1-0
.....*Agg 1-1. Surinam 3-1 on pens*
05.03.00.....Barbados-Grenada 2-2
18.03.00.....Grenada-Barbados 2-3
.....*Barbados 5-4 on agg*
11.03.00.....Aruba-Puerto Rico 4-2
18.03.00.....Puerto Rico-Aruba 2-2
.....*Aruba 6-4 on agg*

Group 2

05.03.00.....St Vincent-US Virgin Islands.....9-0
19.03.00.....US Virgin Islands-St Vincent.....1-5
.....*St Vincent 14-1 on agg*
05.03.00.....British Virgin Is-Bermuda 1-5
19.03.00.....Bermuda-British Virgin Is 9-0
.....*Bermuda 14-1 on agg*
18.03.00.....St Kitts-Turks & Caicos Is.....8-0
21.03.00.....Turks & Caicos Is-St Kitts* 0-6
.....*St Kitts 14-0 on agg*
Guyana v Antigua & Barbuda – Guyana suspended by FIFA; Antigua & Barbuda went through to second round.
**2nd leg also played in St Kitts*

Group 3

04.03.00.....Trinidad & Tob-Dutch Antilles 5-0
18.03.00.....Dutch Antilles-Trinidad & Tob 1-1
.....*Trinidad & Tobago 6-1 on agg*
05.03.00.....Anguilla-Bahamas 1-3
19.03.00.....Bahamas-Anguilla 2-1
.....*Bahamas 5-2 on agg*
05.03.00.....Dominican Rep-Montserrat 3-0
19.03.00.....Montserrat-Dominican Rep 1-3
.....*Dominican Republic 6-1 on agg*
11.03.00.....Haiti-Dominica.....4-0
19.03.00.....Dominica-Haiti.....1-3
.....*Haiti 7-1 on agg*

Caribbean Zone second round

Group 1

01.04.00.....Aruba-Barbados 1-3
16.04.00.....Barbados-Aruba 4-0
.....*Barbados 7-1 on agg*
02.04.00.....Cuba-Surinam 1-0
16.04.00.....Surinam-Cuba 0-0
.....*Cuba 1-0 on agg*

Group 2

16.04.00.....Antigua & Barbuda-Bermuda 0-0
23.04.00.....Bermuda-Antigua & Barbuda 1-1
.....*Agg 1-1. Antigua & Barbuda on away gls*
16.04.00.....St Vincent-St Kitts 1-0
23.04.00.....St Kitts-St Vincent 1-2
.....*St Vincent 3-1 on agg*

Group 3

01.04.00.....Haiti-Bahamas.....9-0
16.04.00.....Bahamas-Haiti.....0-4
.....*Haiti 13-0 on agg*
02.04.00.....Trinidad & Tob-Dominican Rep 3-0
16.04.00.....Dominican Rep-Trinidad & Tob 0-1
.....*Trinidad & Tobago 4-0 on agg*

Caribbean Zone finals

Group 1

07.05.00.....Cuba-Barbados.....1-1
21.05.00.....Barbados-Cuba.....1-1
.....*Agg 2-2. Barbados 5-4 on pens*

Group 2

07.05.00.....Antigua & Barbuda-St Vincent.....2-1
21.05.00.....St Vincent-Antigua & Barbuda.....4-0
.....*St Vincent 5-2 on agg*

Group 3

07.05.00.....Trinidad & Tobago-Haiti 3-1
20.05.00.....Haiti-Trinidad & Tobago 1-1
.....*Trinidad & Tobago 4-2 on agg*

The three finals winners qualified for the overall confederation Semi-Final round.
Group 1 runners-up played off against Canada for a Semi-Final round place; Group 2 runners-up played off against Central American Zone Group A runners-up for a Semi-Final round place; Group 3 runners-up played off against Central American Zone Group B runners-up for a Semi-Final round place.

INTER-ZONE PLAY-OFFS

04.06.00.....Cuba-Canada.....0-1
11.06.00.....Canada-Cuba.....0-0
.....*Canada 1-0 on agg*

11.06.00.....Antigua & Barbuda-Guatemala.....0-1
18.06.00.....Guatemala-Antigua & Barbuda.....8-1
.....*Guatemala 9-1 on agg*

03.06.00.....Honduras-Haiti 4-0
17.06.00.....Haiti-Honduras 1-3
.....*Honduras 7-1 on agg*

SEMI-FINAL ROUND

Costa Rica, Jamaica, Mexico and the United States qualified directly for the semi-final round.

Group C

Canada, Mexico, Panama, Trinidad & Tobago

16.07.00.....Canada-Trinidad & Tobago.....0-2
16.07.00.....Panama-Mexico 0-1
23.07.00.....Panama-Canada.....0-0
23.07.00.....Trinidad & Tobago-Mexico 1-0
15.08.00.....Mexico-Canada 2-0
16.08.00.....Trinidad & Tobago-Panama.....6-0
03.09.00.....Mexico-Panama 7-1
03.09.00.....Trinidad & Tobago-Canada.....4-0
08.10.00.....Mexico-Trinidad & Tobago 7-0
09.10.00.....Canada-Panama.....1-0
15.11.00.....Canada-Mexico 0-0
15.11.00.....Panama-Trinidad & Tobago* 0-1
**Tie played in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad*

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Trinidad & Tob	6	5	0	1	14	7	15
Mexico	6	4	1	1	17	2	13
Canada	6	1	2	3	1	8	5
Panama	6	0	1	5	1	16	1

Group D

El Salvador, Honduras, Jamaica, St Vincent & The Grenadines

16.07.00.....El Salvador-Honduras.....2-5
16.07.00.....St Vincent-Jamaica 0-1
23.07.00.....El Salvador-St Vincent.....7-1
23.07.00.....Jamaica-Honduras 3-1
16.08.00.....Honduras-St Vincent 6-0
16.08.00.....Jamaica-El Salvador 1-0
02.09.00.....Honduras-El Salvador.....5-0
03.09.00.....Jamaica-St Vincent 2-0
08.10.00.....Honduras-Jamaica 1-0
08.10.00.....St Vincent-El Salvador.....1-2
14.11.00.....St Vincent-Honduras 0-7
15.11.00.....El Salvador-Jamaica 2-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Honduras	6	5	0	1	25	5	15
Jamaica	6	4	0	2	7	4	12
El Salvador	6	3	0	3	13	13	9
St Vincent	6	0	0	6	2	25	0

Group E

Barbados, Costa Rica, Guatemala, United States

16.07.00.....Barbados-Costa Rica.....2-1
16.07.00.....Guatemala-United States 1-1
22.07.00.....Guatemala-Barbados.....2-0
23.07.00.....Costa Rica-United States 2-1
15.08.00.....Costa Rica-Guatemala.....2-1
16.08.00.....United States-Barbados 7-0
03.09.00.....Costa Rica-Barbados.....3-0
03.09.00.....United States-Guatemala 1-0
08.10.00.....Barbados-Guatemala.....1-3
11.10.00.....United States-Costa Rica 0-0
15.11.00.....Barbados-United States 0-4
15.11.00.....Guatemala-Costa Rica.....2-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
United States	6	3	2	1	14	3	11
Costa Rica**	6	3	1	2	9	6	10
Guatemala**	6	3	1	2	9	6	10
Barbados	6	1	0	5	3	20	3

The top two from each group qualified for the Final round group of six.

***Play-off required because head-to-head and overall group records were identical.*

SEMI-FINAL ROUND PLAY-OFF

06.01.01.....Costa Rica-Guatemala.....5-2
Tie played in Miami

FINAL ROUND

Costa Rica, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Trinidad & Tobago, United States

28.02.01 .....Costa Rica-Honduras 2-2
28.02.01 .....Jamaica-Trinidad & Tobago.....1-0
28.02.01 .....United States-Mexico.....2-0
25.03.01 .....Mexico-Jamaica 4-0
28.03.01 .....Costa Rica-Trinidad & Tobago 3-0
28.03.01 .....Honduras-United States.....1-2
25.04.01 .....Jamaica-Honduras.....1-1
25.04.01 .....Trinidad & Tobago-Mexico.....1-1
25.04.01 .....United States-Costa Rica 1-0
16.06.01 .....Jamaica-United States 0-0
16.06.01 .....Mexico-Costa Rica 1-2
16.06.01 .....Trinidad & Tobago-Honduras 2-4
20.06.01 .....Costa Rica-Jamaica 2-1
20.06.01 .....Honduras-Mexico.....3-1
20.06.01 .....United States-Trinidad & Tobago....2-0
30.06.01 .....Trinidad & Tobago-Jamaica.....1-2
01.07.01 .....Honduras-Costa Rica 2-3
01.07.01 .....Mexico-United States.....1-0
01.09.01 .....Trinidad & Tobago-Costa Rica
01.09.01 .....United States-Honduras
02.09.01 .....Jamaica-Mexico
05.09.01 .....Costa Rica-United States
05.09.01 .....Honduras-Jamaica
05.09.01 .....Mexico-Trinidad & Tobago
07.10.01 .....Costa Rica-Mexico
07.10.01 .....Honduras-Trinidad & Tobago
07.10.01 .....United States-Jamaica
11.11.01 .....Jamaica-Costa Rica
11.11.01 .....Mexico-Honduras
11.11.01 .....Trinidad & Tobago-United States

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Costa Rica	6	4	1	1	12	7	13
United States	6	4	1	1	7	2	13
Honduras	6	2	2	2	13	11	8
Jamaica	6	2	2	2	5	8	8
Mexico	6	2	1	3	8	8	7
Trinidad & Tob	6	0	1	5	4	13	1

The top three qualify for the finals.

OCEANIA

Clayton Zane: misfit Aussie now in the groove

WHEN Clayton Zane pounced for the goal with which Australia beat France in the Confederations Cup it was not only the fans and officials of the world and European champions who were surprised and upset.

In Norway, news of Zane's latest scalp struck a painful chord with Molde, the club who had virtually given him away to Lillestrom a year before. Zane's subsequent success with both Lillestrom and the Socceroos has raised questions about whether Norwegian football takes enough care to help 'real' foreigners – i.e. non-Nordic players – adapt to their country and their game.

Zane, tall and lanky if not sometimes apparently downright awkward, was hyped as a powerful attacking midfielder when Molde signed him from Northern Spirit in November 1999. The club needed a replacement for Wimbledon-bound Andreas Lund and thought that Zane, who cost a club record fee of £400,000, fitted the bill ideally.

The Norwegian side appeared to make the mistake, however, of expecting Zane to make the adjustment to different social conditions, different weather, different training and tactical preparations without providing sufficient support. The Australian and most of the senior officials and players spoke English together, but that was about the only common ground.

Some 11 months, 14 matches (10 as substitute) and no goals later, Zane ended his debut season labelled as the Transfer Blunder of the Year. Fans and media wondered vociferously about how Molde had come to make such a mistaken investment and how the club could make the best of a bad job.

Winner...Clayton Zane celebrates his goal against France

Any forward suffers the same fate when his luck is out. Confidence nose-dives, the ball bounces out of control, the passes all go awry, every jump for the ball is mistimed and every heading duel is lost. That was where Zane found himself.

His failure proved costly for coach Erik Brakstad, who had recommended Zane's acquisition but then dropped him into a 4-3-3 system that never suited the tall Aussie. Brakstad paid with his job, being replaced by Gunder Bengtsson, the former IFK Gothenburg boss.

Bengtsson made no secret of his lack of faith in Zane, who spent the close season vainly undergoing trials elsewhere – including England – without finding anyone who rated him. Zane returned, depressed, to Norway to find to his own and everyone else's surprise that Lillestrom boss Arne Erlandsen was knocking on his door.

Erlandsen needed an attacking replacement urgently for the injured Arild Sundgot and reasoned that Lillestrom had a better record than most Norwegian clubs in turning foreign misfits – such as Senegal's Mamadou Diallo, Iceland's Runar Kristinsson and Heidar Helguson – into valuable investments.

Lillestrom offered Zane a two-month trial and Molde were delighted to recoup £40,000 in exchange for an option on an eventual sale.

Suddenly, Zane's world turned around. He looked a different player and was hailed as man of the match in initial outings against Sogndal and then Lyn, when he scored both goals in Lillestrom's 2-1 win. As one of Norway's top newspapers put it, he had turned almost overnight into a football 'Zane-sation'.

Seven goals in his first eight games for Lillestrom were all that Erlandsen needed to recommend his club seal the purchase. Molde had no option but to agree, and were further infuriated to discover that, in their haste to offload Zane, they had omitted to include a clause demanding a percentage of any sell-on fee.

A few days later Zane was named by Australia coach Frank Farina in their squad for the Confederations Cup. His transfer value leapt again, now to around £800,000, twice the fee Molde had originally paid.

Zane's luck was in. If Farina had not decided to rest Leeds' Harry Kewell and Mark Viduka, then the Lillestrom forward would probably not have made it to the Confederations Cup. Instead, not only did he make the trip but he was a first-choice starter.

Australia opened with a 2-0 win over Mexico in Suwon and then inflicted a prized and rare defeat on France by 1-0. Zane snapped up the goal with a close-range jab after keeper Gregory Coupet tipped Josip Skoko's free-kick against a post. Only the Socceroos' third match was not such a happy one: Zane was sent off in the closing stages of a 1-0 defeat by hosts South Korea.

That meant he missed the semi-final defeat by Japan, but he was back for what proved another sensational victory, by 1-0 over Brazil, in the third-place play-off in Ulsan.

On the back of those appearances, Zane was included in Australia's starting line-up to face New Zealand in Wellington in the first leg of the Oceania World Cup play-off. The Socceroos won that game 2-0 and the return in Sydney 4-1 to put themselves just one step away from the finals. If they finally make it through by beating South America's fifth-placed side, Zane has clearly put himself in contention for inclusion in the finals squad.

At club level, the 24-year-old forward may not yet be the most famous Socceroo in Europe. But interested parties will have to join an ever-lengthening queue to sign him up.

Lillestrom can expect due reward for thinking Australian.

Keir Radnedge

0 or 1 team(s) qualify

FIRST ROUND

Group 1

American Samoa, Australia, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga

07.04.01.....Samoa-Tonga 0-1
07.04.01.....Fiji-American Samoa 13-0
09.04.01.....Tonga-Australia 0-22
09.04.01.....American Samoa-Samoa.....0-8
11.04.01.....Samoa-Fiji 1-6
11.04.01.....Australia-American Samoa.....31-0
14.04.01.....Fiji-Australia 0-2
14.04.01.....American Samoa-Tonga.....0-5
16.04.01.....Australia-Samoa.....11-0
16.04.01.....Tonga-Fiji 1-8
All ties played in Coffs Harbour, Australia

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Australia*	4	4	0	0	66	0	12
Fiji	4	3	0	1	27	4	9
Tonga	4	2	0	2	7	30	6
Samoa	4	1	0	3	9	18	3
American Samoa	4	0	0	4	0	57	0

**Qualified for Oceania play-off*

Group 2

Cook Islands, New Zealand, Solomon Islands, Tahiti, Vanuatu

04.06.01 .....Vanuatu-Tahiti 1-6
04.06.01 .....Solomon Islands-Cook Islands.....9-1
06.06.01 .....Tahiti-New Zealand.....0-5
06.06.01 .....Cook Islands-Vanuatu.....1-8
08.06.01 .....Vanuatu-Solomon Islands.....2-7
08.06.01 .....New Zealand-Cook Islands 2-0
11.06.01 .....Solomon Islands-New Zealand 1-5
11.06.01 .....Cook Islands-Tahiti 0-6
13.06.01 .....New Zealand-Vanuatu 7-0
13.06.01 .....Tahiti-Solomon Islands 2-0
All ties played in Auckland, New Zealand

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
New Zealand*	4	4	0	0	19	1	12
Tahiti	4	3	0	1	14	6	9
Solomon Islands	4	2	0	2	17	10	6
Vanuatu	4	1	0	3	11	21	3
Cook Islands	4	0	0	4	2	25	0

**Qualified for Oceania play-off*

OCEANIA PLAY-OFF

20.06.01 .....New Zealand-Australia 0-2
24.06.01 .....Australia-New Zealand 4-1
.....*Australia 6-1 on agg*

Australia will play home and away against the fifth-placed South American team for a place in the finals.

SOUTH AMERICA

Big Phil faces problems from the start

BRAZIL began the 'Big Phil' era with yet another World Cup qualifying defeat, this time going down 1-0 to Uruguay in Montevideo. The result kept the four-times world champions in the top four in the 10-team South American standings – still enough to qualify automatically for next year's finals – but they are now ahead of Uruguay only on goal difference.

Finishing fifth would send Brazil into a two-leg play-off against Australia, while sixth place or below would mean they lose their proud record as the only country to have played at every World Cup.

Apart from coach Luiz Felipe Scolari's dress sense – Big Phil opted for a tracksuit instead of the suits favoured by predecessors Wanderley Luxemburgo and Emerson Leao – there was little noticeable change.

Rivaldo, Roberto Carlos and Cafu once again contributed little and with a midfield containing two tackling specialists in Emerson Ferreira and Roque Junior, there was a distinct lack of supply to front men Romario and Giovane Elber.

Rivaldo did appear to have scored at one point, when his long-range free-kick seemed to be carried across the goal-line by keeper Fabian Carini; otherwise it was another miserable performance from the Barcelona man, who contributed nothing more than a few sideways passes.

Scolari, Brazil's fourth coach in less than a year, had an immediate taste of what his predecessors had been through. On taking over, Big Phil had been promised two full weeks with his players at a training camp in Teresopolis, a mountain retreat two hours from Rio de Janeiro. But only 12 of the 22 players turned up for the initial training session, as European clubs refused to release their players, two defenders were reported doubtful due to injury and left-back Serginho dropped out due to family problems.

Even the team bus broke down on the way from Rio, forcing players to hitch a lift in police vans which had been escorting the team.

"I think these difficulties were to be expected," said Scolari glumly. "Nothing is like we imagine it is going to be. It never will be."

The coach was then obliged to travel to Sao Paulo to take part in a television chat show – at the insistence of federation president Ricardo Teixeira – and to release ever more players for a domestic mini-tournament.

A visit from Ronaldo did little to boost morale. The injury-stricken player had been invited by Scolari to train with the team, but he was restricted to playing three games of table tennis after his club side, Internazionale, insisted he stuck by their recovery programme.

More than ever, Brazilians are looking to Ronaldo's imminent return as a ray of hope, especially as Brazil's run-in is a huge worry.

Their last five qualifiers include a tough home game against Paraguay as well as trips to Argentina – who would like nothing more than to contribute to Brazil missing the World Cup – and Bolivia. The latter game should be in La Paz at 3,600 metres above sea level, where Bolivia are almost invincible. But a desperate Brazilian federation has already begun manoeuvring to have the match moved down to Santa Cruz de la Sierra, which is only a few hundred metres above sea level.

Bolivia have played all their other home games in La Paz, and considering they have not lost at home and not picked up a point at any lower altitudes, such a move would be grossly unfair on all the other South American teams. Furthermore, the rules state that teams in the South American qualifiers use the same city for all home games (Brazil have been allowed to use Rio and Sao Paulo due to the country's size).

As Bolivia campaigned furiously to be allowed to use La Paz in the first place and as FIFA president Sepp Blatter visited the city himself, it can only be assumed that FIFA and Bolivia will stick with La Paz and make sure Brazil are not unduly aided in their search for three points.

Brian Homewood

4 or 5 teams qualify

Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela

28.03.00 .....Colombia-Brazil 0-0
29.03.00 .....Argentina-Chile 4-1
29.03.00 .....Ecuador-Venezuela 2-0
29.03.00 .....Peru-Paraguay 2-0
29.03.00 .....Uruguay-Bolivia 1-0
26.04.00 .....Bolivia-Colombia 1-1
26.04.00 .....Brazil-Ecuador 3-2
26.04.00 .....Chile-Peru 1-1
26.04.00 .....Paraguay-Uruguay 1-0
26.04.00 .....Venezuela-Argentina 0-4
03.06.00 .....Paraguay-Ecuador 3-1
03.06.00 .....Uruguay-Chile 2-1
04.06.00 .....Argentina-Bolivia 1-0
04.06.00 .....Colombia-Venezuela 3-0
04.06.00 .....Peru-Brazil 0-1
28.06.00 .....Brazil-Uruguay 1-1
28.06.00 .....Venezuela-Bolivia 4-2
29.06.00 .....Chile-Paraguay 3-1
29.06.00 .....Colombia-Argentina 1-3
29.06.00 .....Ecuador-Peru 2-1
18.07.00 .....Paraguay-Brazil 2-1
18.07.00 .....Uruguay-Venezuela 3-1
19.07.00 .....Argentina-Ecuador 2-0
19.07.00 .....Bolivia-Chile 1-0
19.07.00 .....Peru-Colombia 0-1
25.07.00 .....Ecuador-Colombia 0-0
25.07.00 .....Venezuela-Chile 0-2
26.07.00 .....Brazil-Argentina 3-1
26.07.00 .....Uruguay-Peru 0-0
27.07.00 .....Bolivia-Paraguay 0-0
15.08.00 .....Chile-Brazil 3-0
15.08.00 .....Colombia-Uruguay 1-0
16.08.00 .....Argentina-Paraguay 1-1
16.08.00 .....Ecuador-Bolivia 2-0
16.08.00 .....Peru-Venezuela 1-0
02.09.00 .....Chile-Colombia 0-1
02.09.00 .....Paraguay-Venezuela 3-0
03.09.00 .....Brazil-Bolivia 5-0
03.09.00 .....Peru-Argentina 1-2
03.09.00 .....Uruguay-Ecuador 4-0
07.10.00 .....Colombia-Paraguay 0-2
08.10.00 .....Argentina-Uruguay 2-1
08.10.00 .....Bolivia-Peru 1-0
08.10.00 .....Ecuador-Chile 1-0
08.10.00 .....Venezuela-Brazil 0-6
15.11.00 .....Bolivia-Uruguay 0-0
15.11.00 .....Brazil-Colombia 1-0
15.11.00 .....Chile-Argentina 0-2
15.11.00 .....Paraguay-Peru 5-1
15.11.00 .....Venezuela-Ecuador 1-2
27.03.01 .....Colombia-Bolivia 2-0
27.03.01 .....Peru-Chile 3-1
28.03.01 .....Argentina-Venezuela 5-0
28.03.01 .....Ecuador-Brazil 1-0
28.03.01 .....Uruguay-Paraguay 0-1
24.04.01 .....Chile-Uruguay 0-1
24.04.01 .....Ecuador-Paraguay 2-1
24.04.01 .....Venezuela-Colombia 2-2
25.04.01 .....Bolivia-Argentina 3-3
25.04.01 .....Brazil-Peru 1-1
02.06.01 .....Paraguay-Chile 1-0
02.06.01 .....Peru-Ecuador 1-2
03.06.01 .....Argentina-Colombia 3-0
03.06.01 .....Bolivia-Venezuela 5-0
01.07.01 .....Uruguay-Brazil 1-0
14.08.01 .....Chile-Bolivia
14.08.01 .....Venezuela-Uruguay
15.08.01 .....Brazil-Paraguay
15.08.01 .....Colombia-Peru
15.08.01 .....Ecuador-Argentina
04.09.01 .....Chile-Venezuela
04.09.01 .....Peru-Uruguay
05.09.01 .....Argentina-Brazil
04/05.09.01 ...Colombia-Ecuador
05.09.01 .....Paraguay-Bolivia
06.10.01 .....Bolivia-Ecuador
06.10.01 .....Brazil-Chile
06.10.01 .....Paraguay-Argentina
06.10.01 .....Uruguay-Colombia
06.10.01 .....Venezuela-Peru
07.11.01 .....Argentina-Peru
07.11.01 .....Bolivia-Brazil
07.11.01 .....Colombia-Chile
07.11.01 .....Ecuador-Uruguay
07.11.01 .....Venezuela-Paraguay
14.11.01 .....Brazil-Venezuela
14.11.01 .....Chile-Ecuador
14.11.01 .....Paraguay-Colombia
14.11.01 .....Peru-Bolivia
14.11.01 .....Uruguay-Argentina

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Argentina	13	10	2	1	33	11	32
Paraguay	13	8	2	3	21	11	26
Ecuador	13	8	1	4	17	16	25
Brazil	13	6	3	4	22	12	21
Uruguay	13	6	3	4	14	8	21
Colombia	13	5	4	4	12	12	19
Bolivia	13	3	4	6	13	19	13
Peru	13	3	3	7	12	17	12
Chile	13	3	1	9	12	18	10
Venezuela	13	1	1	11	8	40	4

Top four teams qualify automatically for the finals. Fifth-placed team play off against Australia for a place in the finals.

Push and shove...Emerson of Brazil vies with Uruguay's Guigou

United set the standards

The British record capture of Veron has sent a clear message to the champions' rivals, says Gavin Hamilton

Hoisting the colours...Ferguson and record-breaking signing Veron

THE message from Manchester United to their rivals is a simple one, easy to understand but hard to accept – catch us if you dare.

In the space of two months, United have broken the British transfer record twice. First, paying PSV £19million for Ruud Van Nistelrooy, and now £28.1m to Lazio for Juan Sebastian Veron.

The signing of Veron is hugely significant. Never before has one of the world's best players, one at the peak of his powers, left Italy's Serie A to move to England.

Italians may argue that the scandal over Veron's false passport forced him out of Serie A. However, the Argentina midfielder had the chance to stay in Italy, with Internazionale, but rejected it.

"I have always been searching for a world-class player and we have that in Veron," said United manager Sir Alex Ferguson. "All the players will sit up now they know we have signed him. There were times last season when they needed a challenge. Juan will provide that. He will lift everyone."

Last season, United cruised to the Premier League title but failed to raise their game for the Champions League. Veron's arrival is clearly designed to bridge that gap.

Perhaps crucially, Veron will become United's highest-paid player, on £80,000 a week. In the past, the board's reluctance to match the wages on offer in Italy and Spain has deterred the likes of Gabriel Batistuta and Rivaldo. This summer, United have had no such inhibitions and are ready to fund Ferguson's European Cup bid in his final season in charge.

In another victory for Ferguson, the 59-year-old has signed a five-year deal to act as a part-time consultant for the club – the global ambassadorial role he had been seeking for his retirement.

United also agreed new, extended contracts with Paul Scholes, Wes Brown, Ryan Giggs, Phil Neville and Nicky Butt. Only David Beckham has yet to put pen to paper on a new deal, but United are confident the England captain will sign.

Chelsea are doing their best to confound the critics who allege the expensive Chelsea Village property development is restricting the money available to spend on the team.

Chelsea spent the best part of £25m on Emmanuel Petit, Frank Lampard and William Gallas. The pressure is on Claudio Ranieri to deliver a Champions League place, otherwise the accountants will want answers.

Arsenal have spent a similar amount on transfers to Chelsea and in addition must find the £20m agreed with Sol Campbell for the duration of his four-year contract.

Of the other likely challengers, Leeds and Liverpool have spent relatively modestly. Leeds have paid the £8m agreed with Inter last season for the permanent signing of Robbie Keane, while agreeing a new deal with the in-demand Mark Viduka.

TEAM BY TEAM

ARSENAL

A busy summer at Highbury, with Sol Campbell's arrival from Spurs grabbing all the headlines. Significantly, Arsene Wenger has invested heavily in young Englishmen – Campbell, striker Francis Jeffers (Everton, £8m) and keeper Richard Wright (Ipswich, £5m) – for the first time, while Dutchman Giovanni Van Bronckhorst could bring some guile to midfield. He is no Patrick Vieira, however.

ASTON VILLA

The departures of Gareth Southgate (Middlesbrough) and David James (West Ham) raised serious questions about Villa's ambitions which the surprise signing of Peter Schmeichel (Sporting Lisbon, free) does not answer. Other new arrivals are Mustapha Hadji (Coventry, £2m plus Julian Joachim), Hassan Kachloul (Southampton, free) and Southgate's replacement, Olof Mellberg (Racing Santander). What price John Gregory as the first manager to quit?

BLACKBURN

Back in the big time after two seasons away and their 1995 League title success seems an age ago. Manager Graeme Souness has yet to splash much of the cash bequeathed by the club's late benefactor, Jack Walker. So far, striker Conradi Grabbi (£6.75m from Serie B side Ternana) and Alan Mahon (£1.5m, Sporting Lisbon) have been the main additions. Don't expect fireworks, just steady progress.

BOLTON

Promoted via the play-offs and so favourites to go straight back down. Manager Sam Allardyce has taken Djibril Diawara from Torino and Akinori Nishizawa (Cerezo Osaka) both on loan for the season, and signed the promising Dane Henrik Pedersen (Silkeborg, £600,000). But this may not be enough to avoid the drop.

CHARLTON

The club's biggest summer signing was that of manager Alan Curbishley, who agreed to stay at The Valley despite an offer from old club West Ham. Jason Euell joins for a club record £4.75m from Wimbledon while another striker, Shaun Bartlett, has made his loan deal from Zurich permanent.

CHELSEA

More changes at Stamford Bridge, with captain Dennis Wise dispatched to Leicester, Gustavo Poyet decamping to Spurs, and Bernard Lambourde and Pierre Issa returning to France. In come Frank Lampard (West Ham), Emmanuel Petit (Barcelona) and William Gallas (Marseille), leaving little change from £25m. Coach Claudio Ranieri will be expected to deliver more than last season.

DERBY

The sale of the versatile Rory Delap should send the alarm bells ringing, with Fabrizio Ravanelli stalling on a return to England. Manager Jim Smith is likely to retire at the end of the season. What price an early bath?

EVERTON

Manager Walter Smith is already under pressure after the sale of Francis Jeffers (Arsenal) and the failure to agree a new contract with Michael Ball. But centre-back Alan Stubbs (Celtic, free) returns to the club he left as a teenager and Tomasz Radzinski (Anderlecht, £4.5m) could provide goals.

FULHAM

Who'd have thought it? Five years ago, Fulham were on the brink, heavily in debt and in danger of toppling out of the Football League. Now, thanks to Mohamed Al Fayed's millions, Kevin Keegan's infectious enthusiasm (before he left to be England manager) and Jean Tigana's thoughtful coaching,

Fulham are back in the top flight for the first time since 1968. It won't be easy – Tigana lost out to Liverpool and Dortmund for John Arne Riise and Jan Koller respectively. But as long as Fayed's chequebook stays open, Fulham should survive and, ultimately, thrive.

IPSWICH

A quiet summer so far in Suffolk, with Richard Wright sold to Arsenal for £6million. His replacement, Andy Marshall, has done a Sol Campbell, crossing the East Anglia divide and arriving on a free transfer from Norwich. Spanish striker Pablo (Celta Vigo, free) is the other main addition. European football is on the agenda, but a repeat of last season's heady heights seems unlikely.

LEEDS

No new faces but Leeds did their big shopping last season (Robbie Keane, Rio Ferdinand) and spent the summer finalising new contracts with Mark Viduka, Olivier Dacourt and Ian Harte, and paying Inter the remaining balance for the permanent transfer of Keane. With no Champions League to act as a distraction, a serious domestic title challenge will be the minimum expected of David O'Leary's men.

LEICESTER

Dennis Wise (Chelsea, £1.5m) and Ian Walker (Spurs, £2.5m) will bring experience to the mix, but manager Peter Taylor admits he still needs a striker. A repeat of last season's high-flying start looks beyond them.

LIVERPOOL

After the cup treble, comes the League challenge. Liverpool start the season better equipped to compete for the title than for more than a decade. Norwegian John Arne Riise (Monaco, £4m) was coach Gerard Houllier's main summer purchase, although the future of Robbie Fowler remains a hot potato on Merseyside. The way Liverpool coped with a gruelling fixture pile-up to win the treble suggests they can compete on two fronts in 2001-02. But they will need Houllier's rotating skills to pull it off.

MANCHESTER UNITED

Everything seems rosy at Old Trafford. Record signings Ruud Van Nistelrooy and Juan Veron will help United raise their game in midweek European outings, the main failure last season. The unsuccessful chase for Lilian Thuram suggests Sir Alex Ferguson, in his final season, knows his defence still needs reinforcing. The dream scenario is for Ferguson to bow out by winning the European Cup in his home city of Glasgow. Don't bet against it.

MIDDLESBROUGH

All change at the Riverside, with former Manchester United assistant manager Steve McLaren bringing in a new coaching staff. Gareth Southgate (Aston Villa, £6.5m) adds experience, while the signing of Slovakian Szilard Nemeth, one of Europe's most promising young players suggests that the days of Boro signing ageing mercenaries are numbered.

NEWCASTLE

A frustrating summer for manager Bobby Robson, with deals to sign Laurent Robert from PSG and Boudewijn Zenden from Barcelona scuppered. This made the confirmed deals for Craig Bellamy (Coventry, £6m) and Robbie Elliott (Bolton, free) look a little lightweight. Again, much depends on the fitness of Alan Shearer.

SOUTHAMPTON

A new stadium but all is not well. Stuart Gray, caretaker boss following the spring departure of Glenn Hoddle, gets the job by default, after bigger names (Harry Redknapp, David Platt) rejected it. Anders Svensson (Elfsborg, £700,000) looks to be a useful buy, as does Rory Delap (Derby, £4m). But the Saints are likely to struggle again.

SUNDERLAND

Manager Peter Reid has again gone shopping overseas, with French international forward Lilian Laslandes (Bordeaux, £3.6m) the pick of a crop of foreign signings that also includes Nicolas Medina (Argentinos Juniors, £3.5m) and free transfers David Bellion (Cannes) and Baki Mercimek (Haarlem). A UEFA Cup place is again the realistic target.

TOTTENHAM

Sol Campbell's defection to Arsenal was a devastating blow, not least because it served to emphasise the gulf that now exists between Spurs and their north London rivals. Despite promises of a major cash injection, manager Glenn Hoddle has had to make do with Gustavo Poyet (Chelsea, £1.5m), Goran Bunjevcevic (Red Star Belgrade, £1.4m) and Teddy Sheringham (Man United, free). All canny additions, but nobody to get excited about.

WEST HAM

A gloomy outlook for the Hammers, who have a new manager, Glenn Roeder, but so far not many new players. Meanwhile, the inspirational Stuart Pearce has joined Man City as a coach. The signings of David James (Aston Villa, £3.5m) and Sebastien Schemmel (Metz, £465,000) suggest that most of the money from the sale of Rio Ferdinand and Frank Lampard is earmarked for the redevelopment of the West stand at Upton Park.

Vive Les Bleus...Emmanuel Petit has joined the Chelsea foreign legion

Ibrox new boy...Claudio Caniggia

caused the fans to feel a twinge of betrayal after their unstinting support during his ultimately successful battle against cancer over the past two years.

Aberdeen made their first signing for 18 months when managing to lure Belgian midfielder David Bisconti from Charleroi, while Hibs bought Spaniard Francesco Luna from Mexican side Monterrey and Motherwell utility player Derek Townsley.

Alan Fairley

SCOTLAND

Rangers unveil £14m complex

RANGERS have wielded the chequebook once again this summer as they strive to put last season's downturn behind them – but this time the money has been directed not so much towards new players, but towards the establishment of a £14million training complex on the outskirts of Glasgow.

Known as Murray Park, in honour of chairman David Murray, it will also be utilised as a youth academy, as Rangers try to secure the best home-grown talent – an area in which they have had little success in recent years.

Even so, there has been a good deal of transfer activity. After losing midfielders Jorg Albertz to Hamburg and Giovanni Van Bronckhorst to Arsenal, manager Dick Advocaat has brought in midfielder Christian Nerlinger from Borussia Dortmund, veteran Argentinian Claudio Caniggia from Dundee, and Trinidad & Tobago striker Russell Latapy from Hibernian.

Champions Celtic have made little move in the market and have gaps to plug in defence after selling Ramon Vega to Watford and Alan Stubbs to Everton. Vega fired a parting shot at the Celtic board, accusing it of having no ambition, while Stubbs's departure

WALES

Carmarthen out with pride

CARMARTHEN put in a more than creditable performance in the home leg of their InterToto Cup first round tie, holding AIK Stockholm to a 0-0 draw. And even though they went down 3-0 in the return, Carmarthen never lost their determination.

The vacant manager's post at consistent under-achievers Aberystwyth has been filled by former Forest Green boss Frank Gregan, while former Wales winger Leighton James has been appointed director of football at Port Talbot Town. Wayne Goodridge takes charge of team affairs. The club changed their name from Port Talbot Athletic as part of their centenary celebrations.

Mel Thomas

N IRELAND

McBride move makes waves

THE major talking point of the close season was Glentoran favourite Justin McBride's controversial move to arch-rivals Linfield. The 29-year-old, leading club scorer with nine goals last season, had become a free agent.

Moves between Belfast's Big Two are rare and the fact that McBride had been at the Oval for a decade made it all the more dramatic.

Cliftonville had Pat Wall and Michael Collins sent off as they went down 3-1 at Solitude in extra time to Tiligul Tiraspol of Moldova in the first round, second leg of the InterToto Cup. The Moldovans went through 4-1 on aggregate.

Roy Kitson

Dutchman set to flourish among the Highbury home-growns

ARSENAL manager Arsene Wenger has made it clear he wants to build the club's future on a base of home-grown players, and this summer alone has secured goalkeeper Richard Wright from Ipswich, defender Sol Campbell from arch-rivals Tottenham and forward Francis Jeffers from Everton. Yet the Frenchman had few qualms about spending £8.5million on Rangers' Dutch international Giovanni Van Bronckhorst.

Arsenal beat Chelsea in the race to buy the stylish midfielder, and while his arrival was inevitably overshadowed by that of Campbell, Van Bronckhorst may yet prove to be Wenger's shrewdest capture to date.

The presence of compatriot Dennis Bergkamp at Highbury was a key factor in Van Bronckhorst opting to leave Scottish football and make the move south. "I spoke to Dennis a few times and he was very keen on me coming here," he says. "I have made no secret of the fact that I'm a big fan of the Premiership, and Arsenal are one of the great teams in the world."

Van Bronckhorst is prepared for the challenge of Premier League football, saying: "The last three years have been the best of my career but this was the time for me to change direction. I won the championship and lots of prizes in Scotland, and now I want to do the same with Arsenal.

"There is great ambition here," he adds. "You can see by the signings the manager has made this summer that we can mount a big challenge for the title next season."

The controversial capture of Campbell transformed what looked like being a gloomy summer at Highbury into a triumph for Wenger, and Van Bronckhorst appreciates the importance of the deal.

"Campbell is one of the main players in the England team and he is a great signing," he says. "I played against an England Under-18 side that included Campbell and he was so big and intimidating, even at that age. He has grown into an even better player and must be one of the best defenders in Europe."

The future of Patrick Vieira, however, is still in doubt, although Van Bronckhorst is hopeful he will remain with the club, adding: "I'd love to play alongside Vieira this season."

Should Van Bronckhorst's wish be fulfilled, Arsenal's standing among Europe's elite may be set for a rapid rise.

Kevin Palmer

Fact file

Club Arsenal (Eng)
Country Holland
Born February 5, 1975, in Rotterdam
Previous clubs Feyenoord, RKC Waalwijk, Rangers (Sco)
International debut August 1996, v Brazil
International caps 21 (2 goals)
Honours Scottish League 1999, 2000; Scottish Cup 1999, 2000; Scottish League Cup 1998-99

Can anyone catch Bayern?

Nick Bidwell previews the new Bundesliga season

BAYER LEVERKUSEN

Although they managed to scrape into the Champions League qualifying places, last season was fairly horrific for the Rhineland club, with three coaches – Daum, Voller and Vogts – coming and going and their title challenge fading away in the spring. New boss Klaus Toppmoller (ex-Eintracht Frankfurt and Bochum) faces the difficult task of restoring stability and putting some fire in the bellies of a squad which too often went through the motions last term. New faces include keeper Hans-Jorg Butt (from Hamburg), promising young central defender Michael Zepek (Karlsruhe), midfield dynamo Zoltan Sebescen (Wolfsburg) and Turkish international playmaker Yildiray Basturk (Bochum). Provided they also retain the services of midfielder Michael Ballack and Brazilian stopper Lucio, another top-four finish is quite feasible.

BAYERN MUNICH

German champions for the past three years and it's a sobering thought for the rest of the Bundesliga that the Bavarians took the domestic spoils last term without going at full throttle. Why look anywhere else for the title favourites? The key players – keeper Oliver Kahn, wing-back Bixente Lizarazu, midfielders Stefan Effenberg and Mehmet Scholl, and forward Giovane Elber – show no sign of losing their appetite for honours, and the squad has been further strengthened with the acquisition of prolific Peruvian striker Claudio Pizarro (Werder Bremen), the Croat brothers Kovac, stopper Robert (Leverkusen) and utility man Niko (Hamburg), and defensive midfielder Pablo Thiam (Stuttgart). Central defence is one question mark, having sold Swede Patrik Andersson to Barcelona. A knee injury to midfield warrior Jens Jeremies is also a concern.

BORUSSIA DORTMUND

Arguably the one team capable of giving Bayern a run for their deutschmarks. Unpretentious, honest and demanding, rookie coach Matthias Sammer won a lot of admirers last season in his first full campaign as a Bundesliga leader, and he has an outstanding array of talent at his disposal. Czech midfield wonderboy Tomas Rosicky settled in well after his £8million move from Sparta Prague last January, a battle-hardened defence comprising Christian Worns, Jurgen Kohler and captain Stefan Reuter – back after a year out with knee trouble – has experience and competitiveness to spare, and a new strikeforce of Czech man-mountain Jan Koller (Anderlecht) and Brazilian Marcio Amoroso (Parma) promises much. Lars Ricken's return to form should compensate for the loss of midfielder Christian Nerlinger to Rangers.

BORUSSIA M'GLADBACH

The German team of the 1970s are back in the top flight after a couple of years in the Second Division, and with charismatic Dutchman Hans Meyer in charge, there will be few dull moments. Gladbach have reinforced their midfield, signing Markus Munch (Besiktas), Daniel Felgenhauer (Greuther Furth) and Czech international Ivo Ulich (Slavia Prague). But they remain reliant on their main men from last season – attacking trio Peter Van Houdt, a Belgian, Dutchman Arie Van Lent and German Under-20 star Benjamin Auer.

ENERGIE COTTBUS

Survival remains the one aim for the division's fittest and hardest-working team. True to form, coach Eduard Geyer has been looking to the east for bargains this summer, coming up with midfielder Silvio Schroter and forward Lars Jungnickel (both Dynamo Dresden), striker Brasilia (Polish side Pogon) – guess his homeland – and, the biggest coup, Polish international defender or midfielder Radoslaw Kaluzny (Wisla Krakow). The club were further boosted when sought-after forward Sebastian Helbig decided to stay on.

FREIBURG

Surrounded by the beauty of the Black Forest, Freiburg's Dreisamstadion is the ideal setting for the team's attractive one-touch, attacking football, and though they will be pushed to repeat their sixth-place finish of last season, they will always entertain. Continuity has long been the watch-word here and, despite rumours to the contrary, talented young guns such as libero or midfielder Sebastian Kehl – who spurned Bayern Munich – winger Tobias Willi, Mali defender Boubacar Diarra and Georgian wing-back Levan Kobiashvili remain on board. The only notable buy was midfielder Zaza Zamtradaze (Swiss side Winterthur), now the fifth Georgian at the club.

HAMBURG

After finishing only 13th last season, key players Hans-Jorg Butt, the penalty-taking keeper, and the versatile Nico Kovac decided to move on (to Leverkusen and Bayern respectively). The fans were further depressed by the news that their Volksparkstadion home was to be renamed the AOL Stadium in honour of the American internet provider. However, it has not been all doom and gloom in the northern port. Old favourite Jorg Albertz (Rangers) is back on the left side of midfield, Butt's replacement, Martin Pieckenhagen (Hansa Rostock), is very accomplished, and Sergej Barbarez, last season's Bundesliga top scorer, has stayed on. Even so, the goal of European qualification may well prove unrealistic.

HANSA ROSTOCK

In each of the past three seasons, they have done just enough to survive, but it will be all the tougher this term after the departure of top striker Victor Agali to Schalke, and talented keeper Martin Pieckenhagen (Hamburg). Newcomers are keeper Matthias Schober (previously No 2 at Schalke), Dutch left-back

Same again, Stefan?...Effenberg and Kahn contemplate another Bayern sweep

Klose encounter...the Kaiserslautern forward is one of his club's class acts

Delano Hill (Willem II), midfielder Dietmar Hirsch (Unterhaching) and forward Marco Weisshaupt (Freiburg). Coach Friedhelm Funkel will need Togo striker Bachirou Salou to be bang in form.

HERTHA BERLIN

The club just missed out on the Champions League last term and coach Jurgen Rober knows another failure will mean he's history. However, his squad is considerably stronger after the summer acquisition of Brazilian attacker Marcelinho (Gremio), left-sided Belgian attacking midfielder Bart Goor (Anderlecht) and outstanding sweeper Denis Lapaczinski (Second Division Reutlingen). The backbone of midfielder Sebastian Deisler, defender Marko Rehmer and striker and captain Michael Preetz remains. And much more will be expected of Brazilian attacker Alex Alves, who has rarely hit top form since arriving from Cruzeiro 18 months ago.

KAISERSLAUTERN

The Red Devils' form went to pieces last spring, the predictable back-biting started up and there has been little improvement so far this summer. Unsettled French star Youri Djorkaeff has been trying to wangle a move back home while trading public insults with coach Andy Brehme. Even so, in outstanding keeper Georg Koch, great midfield eccentric Mario Basler and brilliant young forward Miroslav Klose, the *Lauterer* do have the class to be a top-four side. They also made some excellent summer signings, particularly Slovenian stopper Alex Knavs (FC Tirol) and Brazilian attacking midfielder Lincoln (Atletico Mineiro).

KOLN

Money is tight at the Rhine city club, with only two cash buys made this summer – attacker Marco Reich (Kaiserslautern) and defender Hanno Balitsch (Waldhof Mannheim). Jorg Reeb (Leverkusen) also arrived, on a free, but coach Ewald Lienen will be pinning his hopes of a UEFA Cup spot on established stars such as young forward Christian Timm and goalscoring midfielder and skipper Dirk Lottner.

1860 MUNICH

Long-serving coach Werner Lorant has worked wonders with few resources in recent years and once again seems to have made some astute, cheap buys – young attacker Sascha Rosler (Ulm) and Belgian defender Didier Dheedene (Anderlecht) arrived on frees, while midfielder Michael Wiesinger (Bayern) and Austrian schemer Markus Weissenberger (Arminia Bielefeld) came for just £1.8m all in. Evergreen playmaker Thomas Hassler and Aussie goalscorer Paul Agostino remain indispensable to the Lions.

NURNBERG

Former Bayern libero Klaus Augenthaler won praise after leading the club to the Second Division title last year, but survival in the top flight will be far from easy. Former Germany keeper Andy Kopke has retired – replaced by Raphael Schafer (Lubeck) – yet of all the promoted sides, they appear to have strengthened the most, signing attacker Kai Michalke and American midfielder Tony Sanneh (both Hertha), plus utility man Dieter Frey (Werder).

SCHALKE

Coach Huub Stevens has every reason to be optimistic about another high-flying campaign, despite the potential psychological damage of losing the title on the last day of last season. In prolific Dane Ebbe Sand and Belgium's Emile Mpenza, Schalke arguably have the Bundesliga's best front line, playmaker Andy Moller is far from a spent force, left wing-back Jorg Bohme is ever-improving, and the defence, marshalled by Pole Tomasz Waldoch, is most under-rated. The squad has been beefed up by the signing of Argentinian defender Anibal Matellan (Boca Juniors), Nigerian striker Victor Agali (Hansa Rostock), and Belgian midfielders Sven Vermant (Club Brugge) and Marc Wilmots (back after a year at Bordeaux). The Royal Blues have a side to grace their new state-of-the-art stadium.

ST PAULI

The students, punks, greens and anarchists who make up the fan base of Hamburg's second club are still celebrating their team's return to the Bundesliga after four years. But they are unlikely to stay for long. Croat forward Ivan Klasnic has left for Werder and the newcomers, midfielder Oliver Held (Schalke) and defender Moudachirou Amadou (Hannover), hardly set the pulse racing. But expect good things from midfielder Markus Lotter and playmaker Thomas Meggle.

STUTTGART

They only just avoided relegation last season and financial constraints have meant no new arrivals. Meanwhile, almost the entire midfield – Pablo Thiam (Bayern), Krisztian Lisztes (Werder), Kristijan Djordjevic (Schalke) and Roberto Pinto (Hertha) – has left. Hopes of staying up lie with coach Felix Magath, keeper Timo Hildebrand, wily Bulgarian creator Krassimir Balakov and Brazilian striker Adhemar.

WERDER BREMEN

One of the best teams after the winter break last season but it will be hard to maintain such momentum now leading marksman Claudio Pizarro has left for Bayern. To fill that void, Werder have turned to another Peruvian, Roberto Silva (Sporting Cristal), but whether they will strike Andes gold again is debatable. Key players are keeper Frank Rost, libero Frank Baumann, Torsten Frings and Austrian oldie Andy Herzog in midfield, and Brazilian striker Ailton.

WOLFSBURG

The loss of midfielder Zoltan Sebescen (Leverkusen) and defender Thomas Hengen (Kaiserslautern) was a blow, but the club have invested wisely in Bulgarian forward Martin Petrov (Servette), Danish defender Michael Madsen (Bari), Brazilian midfielder Robson Ponte (Leverkusen) and Slovakian midfield holder Miroslav Karhan (Besiktas). Consider that the established regulars include keeper Claus Reitmaier, Romanian playmaker Dorinel Munteanu and Polish striker Andrzej Juskowiak and you have a team fit for a top-half finish at least.

Lyon look the likely lads

Nick Bidwell assesses the chances of this season's top-flight contenders

Best bet?...Bordeaux have taken a gamble on PSG's Brazilian striker Christian

AUXERRE

Guy Roux retired last year after almost 40 years as head coach, but is back in charge after successor, Daniel Rolland, led the team to a poor 13th-place finish last term. Even so it will not be easy for Auxerre to achieve their goal of UEFA Cup qualification. Top scorer Stephane Guivarc'h has returned to Guingamp, while young libero Philippe Mexes and attacker Djibril Cisse are being assailed by offers from England and Italy. Joining the Burgundy club's many home-grown talents are Polish striker Piotr Wlodarczyk (Slask Wroclaw), playmaker Yann Lachuer (back from Bastia) and young Nigerian defender Philip Anianka (Cotonou), dubbed the 'new Boli'.

BASTIA

Coach Robert Nouzaret had no fewer than three top-flight jobs last season – at Saint-Etienne, Toulouse and replacing Frederic Antonetti at Bastia last spring – and the odds are against him reversing the quick-change trend. The Corsicans lost several of their best players this summer – keeper Eric Durand (Rennes), midfield warrior Piotr Swierczewski (Marseille), playmaker Yann Lachuer (Auxerre) and, most important of all, attacker Pierre-Yves Andre (Nantes) – and confidence was further undermined when dumped out of the InterToto Cup in the first round by Croatia's Slaven Belupo. Newcomers include midfielders Pierre Deblock and Cyril Jeunechamp (both Auxerre), defender Bernard Lambourde (Chelsea) and schemer Reynald Pedros (Toulouse).

BORDEAUX

Fourth for the past two seasons, the *Bordelais* continue to look to Brazilians to get them back in the Champions League – new arrivals are midfielders Paulo Miranda (Vasco da Gama) and Eduardo Costa (Gremio), and £7million striker Christian (PSG). The latter is a gamble – he was rarely at the races last term after his 16-goal first season. However, coach Elie Baup is convinced Christian will form a devastating partnership with Portuguese Pauleta, who hit 20 goals last season. French international striker Lilian Laslandes (Sunderland) and Belgian midfielder Marc Wilmots (Schalke) were both happy to leave this summer – the former had clashed repeatedly with Baup, while Wilmots was miffed when the club advised him to retire following an ankle operation.

GUINGAMP

The Bretons adapted well to the top flight last season, finishing a more than creditable 10th, and a repeat is certainly within the compass of a side intelligently handled by coach Guy Lacombe. Sadly, top scorer Bruno Rodriguez was only on loan and has returned to Lens. But with prolific Stephane Guivarc'h back at his first club, there should be no loss of firepower. However, retaining attacker Fabrice Fiorese is essential.

LENS

The marriage of volatile Mediterranean coach Rolland Courbis and this solid working-class northern town was always likely to end in divorce, and a narrow escape from relegation was the predictable result. But at least new boss Joel Muller (ex-Metz) is a gritty, low-key leader much more in tune with the no-nonsense mentality of the old mining area. It was a blow to lose central defender Jose Karl Pierre-Fanfan (Monaco), but Senegalese attacker El-Hadji Diouf has signed on permanently from Rennes, while three top-class players – central defender Jean-Yves Walemme and midfielders Pape Sarr and Stephane Pedron – were brought in from relegated Saint-Etienne. A top-six place is not out of the question.

LILLE

Many believe Lille's Vahid Halilhodzic deserved the 2000-01 Coach of the Year award more than Reynald Denoueix of Nantes after he steered his newly-promoted team of misfits and journeymen to a third-place finish. But the Bosnian will again have to delve deep into his coaching bag of tricks to stage a repeat. Attacker Laurent Peyrelade has left for Sedan, central defender Pascal Cygan seems certain to follow suit, while the newcomers – Moroccan striker Salaheddine Bassir (La Coruna), Togo attacker Adekanmi Oloufade (Lokeren) and defender Rafael Schmitz (Brazilian Second Division Malutrom) were not the big names fans were anticipating. However, Lille are a hungry, unified group and no French team are better at soaking up pressure and launching stinging counter thrusts.

LORIENT

The Bretons amazingly managed to win promotion against a backdrop of financial restraints and boardroom wrangling. Yet coach Christian Gourcuff's departure for Rennes is a major loss, and the inspirational qualities of new man Angel Marcos (Niort) are open to question. Lorient's chief asset is forward pair Elie Kroupi and Jean-Claude Darcheville, but despite a League-imposed budget ceiling of just £2.5m, the club have also managed to attract young Bordeaux attacker Pascal Feindouno, Malien defender Seydou Keita (Marseille) and midfielders Nicolas Esceth-N'zi (Caen) and Tchiressoua Guel (Saint-Etienne).

LYON

Last season's runners-up and justifiably the title favourites this time. In Sonny Anderson – France's top scorer for the past two seasons – Steve Marlet and young Sidney Govou, Lyon have the country's most explosive forward line, keeper Gregory Coupet and libero Edmilson star at the back, while Steed Malbranque will make an excellent replacement should playmaker Vikash Dhorasoo leave, as seems likely. Coach Jacques Santini has also secured some outstanding Brazilian talent this summer, making centre-back Claudio Cacapa (Atletico Mineiro) a permanent fixture after a loan spell,

and buying attacking midfielder Juninho Pernambucano (Vasco da Gama). Lyon-born Youri Djorkaeff (Kaiserslautern) and Nantes midfielder Eric Carriere are other targets.

MARSEILLE

France's highest-profile club were demoted to the Second Division this summer because of reported debts of £25m. But they were reinstated after owner Robert Louis-Dreyfus pumped in some necessary francs. Meanwhile, newly-installed director of sport Bernard Tapie has continued his transfer dealings as though nothing had happened. True to the ex-club president's all-or-nothing form, the 'new' Marseille bear little resemblance to last season's low-finishing squad. Stopper William Gallas (Chelsea) will be the most regretted of the many departures, while new faces include willowy Brazilian attacker Dill (Goias), Belgian centre-back Daniel Van Buyten (Standard Liege), the midfield trio of Poland's Piotr Swierczewski (Bastia), Cyril Rool (Lens) and Portuguese Delfim (Sporting Lisbon), and free-scoring Brazilian Mario Jardel (Galatasaray).

METZ

The team's creative heart and soul, midfielder Frederic Meyrieu, has been persuaded to stay, but this season could still be a struggle, with the defence looking particularly threadbare. Long-serving sweeper Sylvain Kastendeuch has retired, excellent right-back Sebastien Schemmel has signed permanently with West Ham, and Colombian keeper Farid Mondragon has left for Galatasaray after being caught with a false Greek passport. The only significant newcomer is Mondragon's replacement, Cameroon's Jacques Songo'o, back from Deportivo La Coruna.

MONACO

Coach Claude Puel was duly shown the door when the 1999-00 champions went into free-fall last term. His replacement, ex-France skipper Didier Deschamps, goes by the title of technical director in the absence of the necessary coaching diploma, and will largely be working with a clean canvas. Utility man Francisco Da Costa (FC Porto), libero Philippe Christanval (Barcelona) and Norwegian midfielder John Arne Riise (Liverpool) have all moved on, with the new arrivals including Argentinian defensive midfielder Lucas Bernardi (Marseille), Italian keeper Flavio Roma (Piacenza), stopper Jose Karl Pierre-Fanfan (Lens) and Algerian schemer Moussa Saib (Auxerre) – the latter unfortunately broke his leg pre-season. Romanian striker Florin Raducioiu and Italian full-back Christian Panucci are also now permanent, following loan spells. Deschamps was a winner as a player and, given time, he should be the same as a coach.

MONTPELLIER

They deserve much credit for bouncing straight back to the top flight after relegation in 2000, but coach Michel Mezy faces a gargantuan task to keep his team among the elite. Their only purchase has been full-back Serge Blanc (back from Lyon), and to make matters worse, promising young defender Ahmed Madouni has gone to Borussia Dortmund. Key man is attacker Tofilou Maoulida.

NANTES

Last season's surprise champions made some excellent summer buys, recruiting outstanding left-sided midfielder Olivier Quint (Sedan) and rangy attacker Pierre-Yves Andre (Bastia), tying previously on-loan schemer Stephane Ziani to a three-year deal, and extending the contracts of two key assets – keeper Mickael Landreau and midfielder Frederic Da Rocha. However, following a season of strained relations with coach Reynald Denoueix, highly-talented forward Olivier Monterrubio has left for Rennes, with playmaker Eric Carriere, the French Player of the Year, and Cameroonian midfielder Salomon Olembe set to follow him. Defence is Nantes' Achilles heel and another League title is unlikely, but there is still more than enough outstanding teamwork and attacking craft for at least a top-six finish.

Lyon livewire...Sonny Anderson

PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN

Coach Luis Fernandez's second stint at the club has hardly gone to plan, with PSG finishing last season marooned in mid-table and several key players – attackers Laurent Robert and Nicolas Anelka, and midfielder Peter Luccin – now eyeing moves abroad. Meanwhile, the signing of Brazilian attacking boy wonder Ronaldinho from Gremio is bogged down in judicial proceedings, and the list of definite newcomers such as veteran Spanish full-back Cristobal (Espanyol), Argentinian defender Gabriel Heinze (Valladolid) and left-back Lionel Potillon (Saint-Etienne) is less than awe-inspiring. PSG have also spent £6m on Saint-Etienne's Brazilian forward Aloisio, but he remains under investigation in the false passport scandal and could find himself banned.

RENNES

Ex-Lorient boss Christian Gourcuff took over from Paul Le Guen this summer and looks well placed to repeat his predecessor's fine sixth-place finish of last season. The partnership up front of new signing Olivier Monterrubio (Nantes) and the Brazilian Lucas should yield plenty of goals, the midfield unit of Olivier Echouafni, Christophe Le Roux and Gael Danic is one of the best in France, and defender Julien Escude is one to watch. Eric Durand (Bastia) has replaced golden oldie Bernard Lama in goal.

SEDAN

Injuries hampered their spring campaign (they still finished a creditable fifth) and the medical bulletins remain grave. Top scorer Cedric Mionnet is still a long-term absentee after breaking a leg last March, while keeper Nicolas Sachy will miss the start of the season with a damaged shoulder. Their absences, plus the sale of Olivier Quint to Nantes, are big blows, but Cameroonian Pius N'Diefi remains to spark the attack. Newcomers are defender Richard Jezierski (Troyes), forward Laurent Peyrelade (Lille) and midfielder Frederic Brando (Marseille).

Prized asset...Nantes' Da Rocha

SOCHAUX

The Second Division champions have kept faith with last season's squad, with midfielder Fabien Boudarene (Saint-Etienne) and striker Marcello Trapasso (Gueugnon) the only new faces. Coach Jean Fernandez will especially look to Brazilian striker Francileudo Santos and schemer Carmel Meriem to inspire them towards survival, their only objective.

TROYES

Finished seventh last term, despite having the smallest top-flight budget, to show just what a prudently-run club, a shrewd coach (Alain Perrin) and a well-organised squad can achieve. Those leaving this summer included midfielder Eric Roy (Rayo Vallecano) and stopper Richard Jezierski (Sedan), while Gharib Amzine (Strasbourg) and Mehdi Leroy (Nantes) have arrived. Crucial to Troyes are Yugoslav playmaker Sladan Djukic and forward Nicolas Gousse.

Troubles mount for Adriaanse

Klaas-Jan Droppert on a bad close-season for the Ajax coach

HOLLAND

PROBLEMS have been piling up for Ajax coach Co Adriaanse, despite managing to keep his promise of leading the club into Europe at the end of last season.

There is ongoing dissent within the squad over Adriaanse's tough training regime, while some players have complained that he is poor at getting his ideas across. Trouble flared up last season when veterans Richard Witschge and Aron Winter were dropped from the first-team picture, reportedly without any explanation. Recently, Witschge is widely known to have told Adriaanse where to get off, in no uncertain terms, so it is all the more surprising that both players are to be included in the new season squad.

Meanwhile, younger Ajax players such as Youssouf Hersi, Kevin Bobson and Brutil Hose have refused to play for Second Division satellite club Haarlem, which they see as a backward step. A partial solution has been found by packing Bobson and Hersi off to top flight NAC Breda, the latter on loan.

Adriaanse also has to consider the possibility of Johan Cruyff becoming the new Ajax president in next year's election. The former international is a potential successor to current incumbent Michael Van Praag, and it is known that Cruyff is not greatly taken with the likes of Adriaanse and Louis Van Gaal, who employ a more theoretical and tactical approach to coaching instead of concentrating on players' skills.

As things stand, Cruyff is unlikely to stand for president since he stepped down as a coach for health reasons. However, he may well be lobbied to put himself forward by the many Ajax board members who want the club to copy the example of Bayern Munich's administrative structure. The German champions are renowned for having a number of top former players (Beckenbauer, Hoeness, Rummenigge) in high positions at the club.

In the transfer market, Ajax have signed Egyptian striker Ahmed Hossam (Gent), Brazilian defender Maxwell (Cruzeiro) and young Dutch defender Ruud Kras (Volendam).

However, the dealings of Feyenoord have made a much bigger splash. The Rotterdam club managed to retain keeper Jerzy Dudek, despite a personal agreement with Arsenal, while striker Pierre Van Hooijdonk (Benfica), full-backs Ramon Van Haaren (Roda JC) and Pieter Collen (NEC), and Japanese midfielder Shinji Ono have all been brought in.

Problems with the boss...Ajax's Richard Witschge

Meanwhile, David Connolly has moved out, to English First Division side Wimbledon, after cancelling his initial agreement with AZ. The Republic of Ireland international's explanation for the switch of plan was that his wife felt homesick. AZ are considering legal action.

Champions PSV have been boosted by the decision of skipper Mark Van Bommel to stay on.

Sparta and Fortuna Sittard won their respective play-off groups to retain their top-flight berths. However, both will be under new management. Ex-Holland coach Frank Rijkaard surprisingly took over from Wim Van Hanegem at Sparta, with Hans Verel coming in for Frans Thijssen at Fortuna.

Comeback blues...Zuberbuhler

SWITZERLAND

Zuberbuhler makes disastrous comeback

INTERNATIONAL keeper Pascal Zuberbuhler had a catastrophic return to action from injury when his club side, Basle, were thrashed 8-1 by Sion on the opening day of the new season.

"Our defence was demolished in the second half with Sion leading 2-1 at the interval," Zuberbuhler said after the game. "I was helpless to stem the rout."

Frenchman Julien Poueys and Cameroonian Samuel Ojong both scored hat-tricks for Sion, the first time two players from the same team have hit three in a single game since the current League format was introduced in 1987.

Basle had better fortunes in the InterToto Cup, progressing to the third round after a 5-0 aggregate defeat of Iceland side Grindavik. Lausanne also went through, beating Sturm Graz 4-3.

Among other notable domestic first-day results was the 2-0 home defeat of UEFA Cup qualifiers Servette by Zurich. Coach Lucien Favre has expressed his concern at the reduced budget for new signings, which has stemmed from the reluctance of owner Canal Plus ploughing any more money into the club.

The French TV network is, in fact, trying to divest its majority stake in Servette because it already owns Paris Saint-Germain. Under UEFA rules, no two clubs under the same ownership are allowed to participate in the same European competition, and PSG are potential UEFA Cup qualifiers through the InterToto route.

The curtain has finally come down on Berne's legendary Wankdorf stadium, home of 11-times champions Young Boys and the stage for Germany's first World Cup Final win, in 1954. The stadium is being demolished to make way for a new 40,000-capacity arena, due for completion in summer 2004.

New national team coach Kobi Kuhn has created a stir by recommending a reduction of the current 12-team League format to 10. His view is supported by the newly elected FA hierarchy.

Ivar von Rulach

PORTUGAL

Funding problems beset Euro 2004

THE recent government announcement of a raft of public spending cuts, including suspension of works on the Oporto underground system, led the chairman of the Confederation of Northern Industries to state that "the government should cut investment and expenditure on other projects which, like Euro 2004, are of no practical value to our country".

The situation has brought to light once again the fact that Portugal will stage the European Championship in three years' time only because backing out at this stage would cause a major loss of face with UEFA and with the rest of Europe in general.

No doubt, Prime Minister Antonio Guterres and his aides would rather cancel the tournament and utilise the money elsewhere. Instead, government funds will now have to be allocated to

Euro 2004 to ensure the prestigious project moves forward as planned.

The situation at Benfica remains fraught, with president Manuel Vilarinho said to be on the verge of resigning because of the civil war that has broken out over plans to demolish the Stadium of Light.

Vilarinho is also being threatened with legal action by Mario Jardel if he does not receive an indemnity payment of £1.5million. The Brazilian striker signed a pre-contract with Benfica last October – a deal that helped Vilarinho win office – stating that he would receive the money should the Lisbon Eagles not succeed in signing him from Galatasaray. Jardel recently signed with Marseille.

Alberto da Silva

BELGIUM

Leekens let go by Lokeren

GEORGES LEEKENS, the former national team boss, was the best-known casualty after a frenzy of close-season activity on the coaching front.

Eyeing Everton...Tomasz Radzinski

Lokeren decided against renewing Leekens' contract, installing former Geel coach Paul Put instead. Put led Geel up to the First Division two years ago but lost his job when the club went straight back down.

Ex-Eendracht Aalst coach Wim De Donick stepped into the vacancy at Royal Antwerp created by the departure of Regi Van Acker for Lierse.

Van Acker's predecessor was Walter Meeuws, who has left for Turkish side Genclerbirligi.

Genk, who had waited patiently to name a successor to Johan Boskamp, finally plumped for Dutchman Sef Vergoossen, whom they managed to tempt away from Roda JC.

The playing exodus from champions Anderlecht has continued, with Tomasz Radzinski the latest to leave, for Everton. However, the Brussels side have intriguingly been linked with former striker Gilles De Bilde, who is out of favour at Sheffield Wednesday.

As indicated last month, Second Division Turnhout were punished with demotion for accumulating a massive debt. However, they were relieved to go down only one division, to the Third. They had feared an even lower drop.

Nicholas Harling

REP IRELAND

Saints unite

A NUMBER of ground-sharing and merger deals have been struck in the run-up to the start of the new season, on August 12.

Premier Division side St Patrick's Athletic have joined forces with First Division St Francis, and will officially be known as St Patrick's Athletic, incorporating St Francis. The club, which would familiarly like to be called the Dublin Saints, will play their home games at St Patrick's Richmond Park.

The timing of the merger left the League in a pickle, since it came after the fixtures for the new season had been published. They were left with little time to find a replacement for St Francis in the First Division.

Meanwhile, it has been agreed that Shamrock Rovers will play at Shelbourne's Tolka Park on Monday nights until their new stadium in Tallaght is completed. Another club opting for Monday night football are Dublin City (formerly Home Farm Fingal), who will share Dalymount Park with Bohemians.

On the playing front, Pat Scully, who fell out with Shelbourne at the end of last season, has joined Shamrock Rovers, where he will link up again with manager Damien Richardson. Paul Doolin, one of the League's longest-serving players, has retired and is now coaching at University College Dublin.

Sean Creedon

Pro-file Daniel Van Buyten

Son of a Belgian wrestler getting to grips with his role at Marseille

YOUNG Belgian central defensive colossus Daniel Van Buyten is now standing tall as his country's most expensive player following his £7.7million move from Standard Liege to Marseille.

The 23-year-old had been linked with Leeds United and Schalke. But once Marseille appeared on the scene, they were always likely to get their man.

OM president Robert Louis-Dreyfus was until recently a majority shareholder at Standard, Van Buyten was a childhood fan of the Provencal club, and the Belgian starlet was keen to renew acquaintances with Tomislav Ivic, the Croat coach who had been his mentor at Standard before leaving for Marseille last spring.

"Of course, it will be a big advantage for me that I know coach Ivic and his methods," says Van Buyten, who joined Standard in 1999 from Sporting Charleroi. "I made a lot of progress under him at Standard and I think it will be the same at Marseille.

"OM have just had two poor seasons but that doesn't change anything. Ivic and Bernard Tapie [Marseille's sports director] were very persuasive. I could not refuse. They want to take OM back to the top next season and it's an exciting challenge for me."

Some observers have argued that OM have paid too much for a central defender who is not the paciest and has only limited full international experience – he won his first cap in February. Yet when Ivic describes Van Buyten, who stands 1.96m tall, as the 'new Jaap Stam', he is by no means indulging in flights of fantasy.

Like Stam, Van Buyten is immensely powerful in the air and in the tackle, and bristling with steely competitiveness. But the young Belgian has other qualities too. His positional sense and distribution are sound, and he has the versatility to play as a stopper or sweeper.

Van Buyten, or 'Big Dan' as he is known in Belgium, has certainly inherited the physical stature of his father Francis, a former professional wrestler. He has also benefited from Francis' role as personal trainer and football coach during his formative years. As well as enforcing a tough fitness regime, Van Buyten senior also worked endlessly on his son's skills, particularly his heading.

"There was a field next to our house and so I put up some goalposts there," recalls Francis. "I had seven or eight balls and I would put in crosses for Daniel and his brother Alain to head. These sessions seemed to go on for ever. I would centre something like 120 balls, one after the other."

And how it has paid off.

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Marseille (Fra)
Country Belgium
Born February 7, 1978, in Froidchapelle
Previous clubs JS Froidchapelle, Olympic Charleroi, UBS Auvelais, Somzee, Sporting Charleroi, Standard Liege
International debut February 2001, v San Marino
International caps 2 (1 goal)

Greenland v Tibet – both win!

Jim Holden on a remarkable international encounter

GREENLAND

Best of friends...the Greenland and Tibet teams join forces after their historic match

THE international match the football world tried to ban ended in triumph for both sides – the icemen of Greenland and the mountaineers of Tibet.

The scoreline may have read 4-1 to the Greenlanders, a team coached by former Danish national team boss Sepp Piontek, but as the players linked arms together at the end of 90 minutes it was clear the overwhelming victory was that the game had been played at all.

Neither nation has official FIFA status (though Greenland are seeking it) and Tibet is not recognised as an independent country following its annexation by China in 1950.

The Chinese put massive pressure on Greenland to pull out of the fixture, including the threat of trade sanctions, but that was defied by Piontek and his team.

The game was staged in the Danish capital Copenhagen, but only on a council parks venue because official stadia were ruled off limits by FIFA. Nevertheless, a crowd of more than 5,000 turned up to create a colourful occasion that mocked the fearful sporting politicians.

The match, while decidedly non-international standard, was hard-fought. Tibet took the lead through tiny striker Lobo in the 13th minute, with the equaliser coming from Leon Geisler on the half-hour. It was only in the last 15 minutes, as the exiled Tibetans tired, that Greenland sealed victory, Carsten Rex and Knud Fleischer (two) scoring.

"We have been waiting without success for FIFA to allow us into the official football world," said Piontek. "If they won't do that, we have to find other tiny nations to play instead. We cannot play no games at all."

Tibet are looking for new opponents as well and have made enquiries about games against Monaco and Mali later in the year.

DENMARK

Hodgson leads Superliga exodus

FC Copenhagen's joy at winning the championship quickly turned to anger when coach Roy Hodgson left to join Udinese of Serie A.

The Englishman's departure was a huge shock as the club began preparations for their Champions League campaign, and in the end he was allowed to leave only after compensation was paid. FC Copenhagen may have felt bitter that winning the title had merely proved to be a convenient stepping-stone for the coach, enabling him to return to one of Europe's major leagues. But the lure of Italy or England is hard to resist for men with serious ambition.

As if to confirm the point, many players also departed the Superliga during the summer. Last season's top scorer, Peter Graulund, left Brondby for Bochum, while another emerging striker, Henrik Pedersen, joined Bolton from Silkeborg. Others on the move were Brian Steen Nielsen to Malmo and Allan Bak Jensen to Heerenveen.

At least some Danes returned home, notably Morten Bisgaard, who made the opposite journey to Hodgson.

FC Copenhagen have installed Swede Kent Karlsson as their new coach, while they have also bought Thomas Roll from Silkeborg. They kick off the new season as joint favourites with Brondby in a division strengthened by the promotion of well-supported Esbjerg and Vejle.

The most surprising move of the summer did not involve a Superliga club, however, former international keeper Peter Schmeichel taking almost everyone unawares by joining Aston Villa from Sporting Lisbon.

Sunderland's Thomas Sorensen, Schmeichel's successor as Denmark's No 1 keeper, issued an immediate tongue-in-cheek challenge for the forthcoming Premiership season. "If his team get a penalty against us, I want Peter to take it – so I can save it."

Jim Holden

NORWAY

Title race opens up

ROSENBORG and Viking, who dominated the early part of the season, lost significant ground during June and July, allowing several other sides to enter the fray.

Indeed, Lillestrom went top by a point as the campaign entered its second half after they won 5-0 away to Bryne while Rosenborg and Viking were drawing 1-1 in Trondheim.

Stabaek and Odd Grenland also made up ground and the top five were separated by just two points.

Bryne's heavy defeat by Lillestrom came after the resignation of coach Erik Brakstad, the fourth managerial casualty of the season. The team were bottom of the table at the halfway point of the season.

The trend for Norwegian nationals to return to domestic soccer from abroad shows no sign of abating, but though players such as Jostein Flo, with Stromsgodset, and Rosenborg's Harald Brattbakk have flourished, Jan

Unhappy return...Jan Aage Fjortoft

Aage Fjortoft has had a much harder time. He felt he was made a scapegoat after his new side, ambitious Stabaek, found points difficult to come by at the start of this season. Former Norway captain Rune Bratseth even advised him to "stop playing and take up some other capacity in domestic football".

Sigurd Odegaard

SWEDEN

Malmo snap up Skoog

MALMO finally managed to secure a replacement for departed star Zlatan Ibrahimovic by signing Niklas Skoog from Orebro.

Skoog, 27, previously played for Vastra Frolunda and in Germany for Duisburg and Nurnberg. His transfer was expected to break the previous domestic record, set in 1997, when IFK Gothenburg signed Robert Andersson from Halmstads. However, after lengthy negotiations, Malmo managed to lower the fee to around £500,000.

Malmo bound...Niklas Skoog

Elfsborg's sale of attacking midfielder Anders Svensson to Southampton was followed by the departure of top scorer Fredrik Berglund to Holland's Roda JC.

Helsingborgs goalkeeper Sven Andersson has broken Thomas Ravelli's record of 417 top-flight appearances. The feat puts one over on his rival, whose long-time presence as Sweden's first-choice keeper denied Andersson the chance to establish himself in the national team.

Pentti Hietanen

FINLAND

Tampere on top

TAMPERE have come from nowhere to take pole position in the League table on the back of an eight-match unbeaten run.

Promoted two years ago, they have found the right balance under Ari Hjelm, Finland's most-capped player.

Striker Antti Pohja, who has already scored a dozen goals, has enjoyed a remarkable revival in fortunes. After starring for Kuusysi Lahti and MyPa early in his career, he seemed to have lost his way. Two years ago he was the unwanted man of Finnish soccer, but is now pushing for a Finland place and, perhaps, a career abroad.

In stark contrast to Tampere, champions FC Haka have been beset by problems. Valery Popovitch was ruled out for a month by injury, then skipper Jukka Koskinen damaged his knee and is out for the rest of the season.

Pentti Hietanen

ICELAND

Tangerine dream closer to reality

LAST season's surprise side, Fylkir, continued to lead the League as the campaign entered its second half, raising the possibility that the tangerine dream of 2000 will be fulfilled this time.

Under Bjarni Johansson, the orange-shirted men from the Reykjavik suburbs are playing with a confidence that could lead to them claiming their first Premier League title in September.

Champions KR are making headlines – for all the wrong reasons. Despite winning the season-opening League Cup, their chronic inability to score goals left them fourth bottom at the League's halfway point, and they are already out of the FA Cup. Coach Petur Petursson resigned after just seven League matches and Scottish assistant, David Winnie, was appointed caretaker.

Grindavik made a victorious debut in European competition, overcoming the long haul to Baku to beat Azerbaijan club Vilash 3-1 on aggregate in the InterToto Cup. However, they crashed 5-0 to Basle in the next round.

Rab Christie

Barça's defensive linchpin already missed by Bayern

STRANGE game, football. Swedish centre-back Patrik Andersson plays a pivotal role in Bayern Munich's double triumph in the Champions League and Bundesliga last season and before he has time to reflect on producing the best football of his career, his club promptly sell him to Barcelona for £5million.

No wonder Bayern's Stefan Effenberg spoke out when he heard the club were open to offers for Andersson. "I wouldn't offload him," he said. "I was amazed. He showed his high class last season."

The case for retaining Andersson's aerial power, physical strength and organisational qualities should have been irresistible. After all, Bayern's rearguard had been seriously under-achieving before the Swede was incorporated on a regular basis during the second half of the campaign. He also entered Bayern folklore as scorer of the injury-time free-kick equaliser at Hamburg which clinched the Bundesliga title on the last day of the season.

Andersson was at his peak and a logical choice as the best libero in Germany when *Kicker* magazine compiled its rankings.

Effenberg was not the only Bayern player to recognise the Swede's contribution. "Andersson turned things around for us," said defender Thomas Linke. "It's unbelievable how well he can read a game and choose the right option. He knows exactly what has to be done."

Bayern general manager Uli Hoeness claimed that the move was prompted by Andersson, who was one of the club's lowest earners. But many believe Bayern could have done much more to retain him.

The fact remains that they have gambled in letting him go. Coach Ottmar Hitzfeld may have a number of options for the role of defensive co-ordinator but none looks foolproof. Jens Jeremies, Ciri Sforza and Pablo Thiam, the new signing from Stuttgart, are all arguably better in midfield, while ex-Leverkusen defender Robert Kovac does not have Andersson's authority or strategic feel.

After turning Bayern's defence around, Andersson now has the task of plugging a porous Barça rearguard. But the Swede insists he will not be overawed by the challenge.

"I'm used to coping with pressure," he says. "Everyone at Barcelona wants the team to return to its rightful place at the top of Spanish football and I will do all I can to help make it happen."

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Barcelona (Spa)
Country Sweden
Born August 18, 1971, in Borgeby
Previous clubs Bjarreds IF, Malmo FF, Blackburn Rovers (Eng), Borussia Monchengladbach (Ger), Bayern Munich (Ger)
International debut January 1992, v Australia
International caps 88 (2 goals)
Honours German League 2000, 2001 (Bayern); German Cup 1995 (Borussia Monchengladbach), 2000 (Bayern)

Big Two land players on the cheap

Hasan Cemali reports on a controversial transfer ruse

TURKEY

THE country's two leading clubs stand accused of setting up 'pseudo' transfers – taking players on loan from 'holding' clubs – ahead of the new season, in order to save money during these financially difficult times.

Galatasaray are said to have arranged the transfer of Genclerbirligi forward Umit Karan to Bulgarian side Boreo so that the Istanbul side can use him for nothing. Umit joined Boreo on a Bosman free earlier this summer, but has since gone to Gala on loan and started pre-season training.

A similar situation has arisen at Fenerbahce, who have midfielder Hakan Bayraktar at their disposal after he left Gaziantepspor for Polish club Pogon, also on a free transfer.

The champions have made a number of direct dealings in the market, bringing in libero Umit Ozat from Genclerbirligi, left-sided midfielder Ceyhun (Siirt Jet-Pa) and attacking left-sided defender Ali Akdeniz (Samsunspor).

Meanwhile, there have been mass departures at Galatasaray, with Gheorghe Hagi retiring, Emre Belozoglu and Okan Buruk heading for Inter, Fatih Akyel to Mallorca, Claudio Taffarel to Parma, and Ahmet Yildirim and Mehmet Aksu to Besiktas. Mario Jardel is on his way to Marseille.

In response, the club have signed forward Goktan Berkant (Bayern Munich), Colombian goalkeeper Farid Mondragon (Metz), midfielder Sergen Yalcin (Siirt Jet-Pa), Colombian Gustavo Mendez and Sebastien Perez from Marseille, and midfielder Ayhan Akman from Besiktas.

The latter is seen as the replacement for Hagi, though he failed to live up to expectations during his brief spell at his previous club. Indeed, he became the subject of a hate campaign last season after he was spotted by TV cameras laughing on the subs' bench during Besiktas' 3-1 defeat at the hands of his former club Gaziantepspor. However, Ayhan remains one of the most talented midfielders in the country.

Heir apparent...Gala see Ayhan as the successor to Hagi

Fener's charismatic chairman, Aziz Yildirim, who stepped down at the end of last season declaring that nothing would persuade him to change his mind, subsequently performed a U-turn, and has since been elected for the fourth time.

Bowing out...Dragan Stojkovic

YUGOSLAVIA

Red Star lose key men after title win

AFTER a tightly-contested race with arch-rivals Partizan Belgrade, Red Star won their 22nd League title, beating Milicionar 4-1 on the final day to finish two points ahead of their city rivals.

However, the champions must now contend with the loss of captain Goran Bunjevcevic (to Tottenham) and forward Goran Drulic (Zaragoza) ahead of their European campaign.

Sartid Smederevo made a notable Euro debut, beating Dundee 5-2 on aggregate in the first round of the InterToto Cup, before going out 6-3 to 1860 Munich.

The national side, officially an A team but in reality not even a B side, finished the season with two defeats at the Kirin Cup in Japan – 2-0 to Paraguay, 1-0 against the hosts.

The latter was Dragan Stojkovic's last official international, though a farewell game is scheduled to be played in Belgrade in the autumn. He is expected to take a leading role in the country's football administration.

Vladimir Novak

CROATIA

Ivanisevic handed Hajduk role

WIMBLEDON tennis champion Goran Ivanisevic has been offered the chance to play for champions Hajduk Split, his favourite team. Club president Branko Grgic approached Ivanisevic on his return to his home city from his triumph in England to suggest he plays for part of a game next season.

Ivanisevic has stated in the past that his greatest ambition after winning Wimbledon would be to appear for Hajduk. He has already shown his footballing ability, playing for Torcida, a Hajduk supporters' team, in the Croatian indoor league.

Zdravko Reic

MACEDONIA

Relegation issue still unclear

LESS than a month before the new season was scheduled to get under way, it was still unclear whether Tetovo side Shkendia HB would be relegated.

They finished in the third of the four relegation berths but only after suffering a severely disrupted close to their campaign. At times they were unable to train or play because of the fighting between Macedonian forces and ethnic Albanian rebels close to their home city.

The relegation issue became deadlocked after the FA announced that the ultimate decision should be taken jointly by UEFA and Macedonia's politicians.

Argend Beqiri, top scorer in domestic football for the past two seasons, became the latest Macedonian to move to Russia after signing a 30-month contract with Dinamo Moscow.

The former Sloga Jugomagnat striker joins compatriots Igor Mitreski, Goran Maznov and Nikola Gjosehevski (all Spartak) in the capital.

Former national team coach Djoko Hadzievski is back in charge of Vardar, whom he led to title success in the mid-1990s. He has signed Makedonija's Bulgarian striker Mario Petkov, the League's second top scorer last term.

Michel Stojmanovski

MALTA

Held cracks the whip

NEW national coach Siggy Held promised hard work and discipline as

he attempts to turn around the side's recent poor form.

His first official pre-season training session was certainly unconventional. As the squad went on a training run in temperatures of 36°C, Held brought up the rear pedalling his mountain bike.

Hibernians' European campaign was soon over as they went out of the InterToto Cup 4-1 on aggregate to Poland's Zaglebie in the first round.

Sliema Wanderers have continued their rebuilding process, making international defender Brian Said from Floriana their most recent capture.

There have also been major changes at Hamrun Spartans, including the appointment of former Birkirkara coach Atanas Marinov.

Valletta stalwart Gilbert Agius, still a transfer target for Italian Serie C1 club Pisa, was named Maltese Footballer of the Year.

Domenico Aquilina

GREECE

Buy-out may resolve AEK crisis

THE two-month-old ownership crisis at AEK Athens appears to have been resolved with the announcement that two Greek businessmen, Filona and Vasilis Antonopoulos, have bought a controlling stake in the club.

The brothers, whose other business interests include a racehorse breeding company in Germany, were sold a 71.28 per cent stake in AEK by Netmed Hellas, the Greek subsidiary of Dutch subscription TV giant Netmed.

The latter had bought a controlling share from British investment company ENIC, but problems arose when Netmed Hellas tried to sell the club on.

It looked like a buyer had been found in June when a previously unknown Greek expatriate, Alex Skalavenitis, who runs a shipping business in Mexico, was presented to the press as the new owner. However, this turned out not to be the case, and the waters were muddied even further when former owners Yiannis Karras and Stratos Gidopoulos said they were willing to take over once again.

Against this background, Portuguese coach Fernando Santos has been trying to form a cohesive squad following a disappointing campaign last season. However, key striker Demis Nikolaidis has threatened to quit the team because of the instability over the ownership question.

AEK fans have been up in arms over the crisis and some were reportedly responsible for setting fire to a truck belonging to controversial Athens businessman Michalis Trohanas, another previous majority stakeholder at the club who was considering retaking the reins.

Trohanas was originally forced to sell his stake, to ENIC, after protests by fans over his handling of the team.

Lou Economopoulos

Unsettled...Demis Nikolaidis

ALBANIA

Partizani add strength

FORMER champions Partizani, now back in the top division after winning promotion last season, have significantly strengthened their squad. The Tirana side have brought in four Brazilians – midfielders Zheraldino and Pastoril, and forwards Abilio and Karioka – as well as defender Luan Zmijani, captain of champions Vllaznia, and Elbasani defender Taulant Bakiu.

However, perhaps Partizani's strongest card is new coach Nikolai Arabov. The 48-year-old Bulgarian, formerly coach of Sliven in his homeland, has shown himself capable of building a good team without recourse to star players.

Gezim Nushi

Pro-file Michalis Constantinou

Cypriot bought to fire Panathinaikos' title challenge

PANATHINAIKOS, increasingly anxious to end the Greek League hegemony of Olympiakos, have turned to free-scoring Cypriot striker Michalis Constantinou in order to help them outstrip their Athens rivals.

Pana faced some stiff competition for the 23-year-old, with the likes of Udinese, AEK Athens, Anderlecht and Olympiakos themselves all trailing him because of his form for Salonika club Iraklis.

But Pana won the day, breaking their transfer record to bring Constantinou to the capital. They clinched the deal after offering Iraklis a tempting package featuring keeper Costas Chalkias, midfielder Evangelos Koutsores, striker Giorgios Nasiopoulos and a pile of drachma in a transaction worth around £8million.

Coach Yiannis Kirastas was adamant that his club had done good business. "Constantinou impressed me greatly when I coached at Iraklis last season and I'm sure he will be a major asset," he said. "He's one of the sharpest strikers I have ever come across, probably the best marksman in Greek football at the moment. Constantinou has an instinct for being where the chances are and knows how to lose markers in the box."

Although the Cypriot still needs to work on his heading, he has long looked a consummate finisher with his feet. In 1994-95, his debut season for home-town side Paralimni, he scored eight goals in just 13 League starts, and since joining Iraklis in the summer of 1997 he has remained consistently prolific.

He bagged 22 goals during the 1999-00 campaign, and added another 19 last term, finishing runner-up in the national charts.

While acknowledging the part played in his development by Iraklis, the overtly ambitious Constantinou has made no apologies for leaving for the bigger stage of Panathinaikos. "I owe Iraklis a lot," he says. "They have been very good to me and I had four great years there. All the same, I think the time is right to move on. I believe I owe it to myself to keep on aiming higher and higher.

"I received a very good offer by Greek standards from Panathinaikos and it will be a great honour to wear their jersey."

In last season's championship, Panathinaikos had to content themselves with their second consecutive runners-up spot, trailing in 12 points behind Olympiakos. But with Constantinou and Polish star Emmanuel Olisadebe linking up front, and Greek Player of the Year Nikos Limberopoulos operating just behind them, there is every chance Pana can muster the firepower to bridge the gap.

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Panathinaikos (Gre)
Country Cyprus
Born February 19, 1978, in Paralimni
Previous clubs Union of Paralimni (now Enosi Neon Paralimniou), Iraklis
International debut August 1998, v Albania
International caps 21 (5 goals)

Hagi appointed national coach

The former international is charged with winning World Cup qualification, writes Simon Evans

ROMANIA

GHEORGHE HAGI has taken over as coach of Romania, replacing Ladislau Boloni, who quit to join Portuguese club Sporting Lisbon.

Hagi, who played for Galatasaray last season, retired from the international scene after Euro 2000. He has now given up the game completely in order to concentrate on his new post.

The 36-year-old has signed a three-year deal, with his first objective to steer Romania to the World Cup finals. They currently lie second in Group 8, behind Italy, and are clear favourites to secure the play-off berth.

Hagi has no previous experience as a coach, although it is clear he had a big input into team selection and tactics at Euro 2000.

The head coach then, Emerich Jenei, has just been appointed as technical director and is likely to give Hagi a helping hand during the initial stages of his tenure.

Hagi said he was aware that the new role will test him to the limit, commenting: "It's a great challenge, but if you don't like the wolf, don't enter the forest."

New challenge...Gheorghe Hagi

UKRAINE

Last-gasp Dynamo make it nine in a row

KYIV DYNAMO won their ninth consecutive championship when scraping a 2-1 home win over third-placed Dnipro on the final day to finish one point clear of Shakhtar Donetsk.

Title-winner...Andrii Nesmachnyi

The destiny of the title was unclear until the very end of the last round of games. Olexander Melaschenko, the season's revelation, scored Dynamo's winner with just two minutes remaining and only four minutes after Andrii Nesmachnyi had equalised against a battling Dnipro side.

Shakhtar, who had stayed neck and neck with Dynamo all season, also won on the final day, 3-1 away to city rivals Metalurh. But their title bid had hit the rocks the previous week when they only drew 0-0 at home to CSKA.

The two sides had met in the Cup Final a fortnight before, this time with Shakhtar winning 2-1, but only after CSKA had taken them to extra time.

There were several coaching departures as the season wound down. Those leaving their posts were Miron Markevich (Metalurh Zaporizha), Olexander Ischenko (Tavriya), Lev Brovarskyi (Karpaty), Serhiy Morozov (Vorskla), Mikhail Fomenko (CSKA) and Vitally Shalychev (Metalist).

Oleg Zadernovsky

POLAND

League structure changed to stop match-fixing

THE FA has decided to change the structure of the top division in the belief that the new system will reduce the likelihood of matches being fixed.

Last season ended in scandal, with strong suspicions that a number of games had been rigged.

The old, standard home-and-away League system has been abandoned for the 2001-02 season, with the Premier Division now initially divided into two groups of eight. The top four from each will go through to a 'champions' group, the bottom four to a 'relegation' group. Teams will carry forward to the second stage half the points won in the first.

Many observers believe that the new structure is merely cosmetic, but FA officials feel that it can improve the level of competition and cut the possibility for match-rigging.

Adam Nawalka, the coach of new champions Wisla Krakow, shocked the club's fans when he announced his resignation. Nawalka took his decision after stating that "the team is not so strong to guarantee qualification to the Champions League [group stage]".

He has been replaced by Franciszek Smuda, who led Wisla to the title in 1999.

Dariusz Kurowski

CZECH REPUBLIC

Obst replaces ousted Chvalovsky

THE FA has sacked its controversial boss, Frantisek Chvalovsky, who has been held in custody on fraud charges, and replaced him with his former deputy, Jan Obst.

Chvalovsky, who led the federation for a decade, has been under fire for some time. The fraud charges relate to his meat-trading business.

Obst had been vice-chairman since 1990, almost the entire period since the 'velvet revolution', and is seen as offering some continuity.

Pavel Mokry, who withdrew from the race to be the head of the federation, was elected vice-chairman.

Simon Evans

AUSTRIA

Sturm stumble in season opener

THE start of the new season was a case of going straight to the main course, with two of the country's biggest clubs, Rapid Wien and Sturm Graz, locking horns on the opening day.

The game was no great technical showcase, but it was a full-blooded affair, with the physically stronger Rapid coming from behind to win 3-1, all their goals coming in a dozen second-half minutes.

Champions FC Tirol kicked off with a comfortable 2-0 win at Grazer AK, while newly promoted FC Karnten, the Cup holders, lost 2-1 at home to SV Ried. Karnten did, however, carry off the Supercup, beating FC Tirol on penalties after a 0-0 draw.

Nick Bidwell

MOLDOVA

Spiridon in for Matiura

ALEXANDRU SPIRIDON has been appointed as national team coach, replacing Alexandr Matiura, who resigned following the 6-0 World Cup qualifying defeat by Sweden in June.

Spiridon was formerly the Under-21 coach and assistant to Matiura.

There was a controversial end to the League season, with the scheduled promotion/relegation play-off between Chisinau's Haiduc-Sporting-USM and FC Petrocub remaining unplayed.

Haiduc, who finished second bottom in the National Division, withdrew from the contest stating their belief that a number of referees, acting on the orders of the country's football authorities, had intentionally "buried" their club's chances of surviving in the top flight during the final games of the season.

Miron Goihman

Back home...Igor Yanovski

BELARUS

BATE back on top

BATE Borisov thrashed Molodechno-2000 6-3 in the 11th round of games to remain six points clear at the top.

BATE have Vitaliy Kutuzau among their ranks, one of the most exciting discoveries in Belarus for several years and currently top scorer with 12 goals.

Oleg Zadernovsky

RUSSIA

Kryliya lead at halfway point

KRYLIYA SOVETOV were the surprise 'winners' of the first half of the League programme, finishing a point clear of defending champions Moscow Spartak.

However, presuming the team from the banks of the Volga finish in the top few positions, they will have to wait until 2002 to enter European competition.

That time delay can cause the qualifying side to lose momentum. Take the case of Chernomorets Novorossiisk. They finished sixth in 2000, to take Russia's final UEFA Cup spot. However, when it finally came to kicking off in Europe, they were bottom of the Russian top division.

By contrast, CSKA Moscow finished eighth last term and had a disastrous start to the current campaign, losing their first four games. Now, however, they are up to fifth place under the guidance of new owner Yevgeni Giner.

His financial backing has allowed the club to invest in some top names, including midfielder Igor Yanovski, from Paris Saint-Germain.

Anzhi Makhachkala missed a golden chance to win the Cup Final after taking the lead against Lokomotiv Moscow with just a minute of normal time remaining. However, Lokomotiv equalised in injury time and went on to win on penalties to take the Cup for the fourth time in six years.

Victor Gusev

GEORGIA

Reluctant Chivadze retakes the reins

ALEXANDER CHIVADZE has taken over as national coach for the second time following the dismissal of co-coaches David Kipiani and Revaz Dzodzuashvili.

The 46-year-old, who was previously in charge from 1993 to 1996, was initially reluctant to take up the post again since Georgia have virtually no chance of qualifying for the World Cup. However, he has now agreed to oversee the final three Group 8 ties.

Milan utility player and Georgian international Kakha Kaladze has been voted the country's Player of the Year.

Oleg Zadernovsky

Pro-file Vladimir Beschastnykh

Russian forward who's putting the pain of Spain behind him

AFTER being frozen out for the best part of two years at Racing Santander, Russian international forward Vladimir Beschastnykh has wisely decided to return to the club where he began his career, Moscow Spartak.

Beschastnykh started well enough in Spain, following his move to Santander from Werder Bremen in summer 1996. He scored 26 goals in his first three seasons and won over the fans at the El Sardinero stadium with his speed on the counter-attack, ability to hold the ball up and high workrate.

But the blond, baby-faced striker fell out with coach Gustavo Benitez during the 1999-2000 season and, after being dropped, told a Russian newspaper that he sometimes supported the opposition in the hope that defeats would lead to Benitez being given the sack.

Club president Miguel Angel Diaz was furious and the Russian seemed sure to be offloaded. But no buyers could be found and, incredibly, Beschastnykh started last season as a Racing certainty.

But the truce was not to last long. In February, Santander brought in Uruguayan attacker Federico Magallanes, and Beschastnykh was unceremoniously dumped from the squad.

All the Russian could do was sit on the sidelines and wait for July, when his contract expired. However, it was Beschastnykh who had the last laugh. While Santander were falling out of the Spanish top flight, he was moving on a free transfer to Spartak, a switch that gives him his first taste of European club competition in six years.

"I'm glad to be back at Spartak," he says. "I'm honoured that coach [Oleg] Romantsev wanted me to return. He discovered me as a kid of 17, taught me how to play and trusted me enough to put me in the first team.

"I had a good relationship with the fans and players at Santander. Not with the board, though. The president decided there were too many foreigners at the club. It was awful not being able to play."

Yet, for all his problems at Santander, Beschastnykh has not let them affect his international career. Indeed, he has played a key role in Russia's excellent start to the World Cup qualifiers.

"We're unbeaten and as long as we don't lose our heads, we have a good chance of going to the World Cup finals," he says.

"I've been in Russian teams which did not go beyond the first round of the 1994 World Cup and Euro 96. We must do much better in Japan and Korea."

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Moscow Spartak
Country Russia
Born April 1, 1974, in Moscow
Previous clubs Moscow Spartak, Werder Bremen (Ger), Racing Santander (Spa)
International debut August 1992, v Mexico
International caps 53 (18 goals)
Honours Russian League 1992, 1993; German Super Cup 1994

Triumphant Boca pay the price

The Argentinians retained their Libertadores crown, but face another team break-up. Eric Weil reports

BOCA JUNIORS face the break-up of their team for the second season running despite successfully defending the Libertadores Cup in a penalty shoot-out with Cruz Azul of Mexico.

Coach Carlos Bianchi's third triumph in the competition was tempered by the fact that defenders Jorge Bermudez, Anibal Matellan and Hugo Ibarra are off to Olympiakos, Schalke and FC Porto respectively. Marcelo Delgado, who scored the only goal in the first leg of the Final, is set to join Atletico Madrid, while influential playmaker Juan Roman Riquelme is due to move to Barcelona when Argentina's opening championship finishes in December.

Last season, following their Libertadores Cup victory over Palmeiras of Brazil, Boca sold five key men – defenders Walter Samuel and Adolfo Arruabarrena, veteran Jose Basualdo, Gustavo Barros Schelotto and Martin Palermo, the latter easily worth a goal a game.

It all adds up to another rebuilding programme for Bianchi, who first won the Libertadores with Velez Sarsfield in 1994. Coincidentally, each of his triumphs has been decided via a penalty shoot-out.

Bianchi is now Argentina's most successful club coach, having won six domestic League titles – three each with Velez and Boca – and the three continental crowns. He also joins Osvaldo Zubeldia (who took Estudiantes de La Plata to three successive Libertadores Cups from 1968 to 1970) as the only men to have won the Libertadores three times.

This year's Boca team may have been younger and more inexperienced, but they still had their Colombian backbone of goalkeeper Oscar Cordoba, Bermudez and midfielder Mauricio Serna, as well as the Argentinian League's outstanding player, Riquelme. Their teamwork was better, faster and more exciting to watch.

To retain the trophy, Boca were involved in return trips totalling nearly 32,000 miles – to Santa Cruz (Bolivia), Cali and Barranquilla (Colombia), Calama (Chile), Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, and Mexico.

Boca got through their first round group easily enough, losing only to Deportivo Cali in the last game when they had already qualified and sent a reserve team.

They then struggled past Colombia's Atletico Junior, 4-3 on aggregate, in the second round, before sailing through the quarter-finals with a 4-0 victory over Brazil's Vasco da Gama.

In the semis, Boca faced old adversaries Palmeiras, who had also been weakened by the sale of players. The Argentinians almost did not travel to Sao Paulo for the first leg after the squad threatened to strike in a bid to claim money owed to them by the club. The matter was eventually resolved and after two 2-2 draws the tie went to penalties. As in the Final, Cordoba was the hero, saving twice as Boca won the shoot-out 3-2.

The two legs of the Final drew capacity crowds – 110,000 at the Azteca in Mexico City and 60,000 at the Bombonera in Buenos Aires. In the first leg, in Mexico, Boca played a cautious game and were content to hold the Mexicans at bay. Cruz Azul, the first Mexican team to reach the Final, had more of the game but Cordoba was unbeatable, while Riquelme orchestrated the counter-attacks. From one, Delgado scored the only goal five minutes from time.

Boca looked to have the trophy firmly in their grasp but in Buenos Aires, with Riquelme – playing despite injury – having an ineffective game,

Ours again...Bermudez displays the Cup

Cruz Azul were the better side and fully deserved Juan Francisco Palencia's 42nd-minute goal which levelled the aggregate score. The Mexicans then came within a whisker of a sensational triumph when Jose Cardozo hit a post. But in the shoot-out, Boca held their nerve better. Cruz Azul missed three spot-kicks, Cordoba saved one, and Bianchi's men took it 3-1.

Victory earned Boca £2million in prize money and they will now defend the World Club Cup against European champions Bayern Munich in Tokyo on November 26.

The Libertadores Cup's new format this year proved a bonus. Previously a laborious group phase eliminated just five of the 21 teams. Now half the field of 32 faced knockout, leading to more attractive, attacking football right from the start.

After the group phase it was home and away straight knockout all the way to the Final – giving the fans a format much easier to understand than the convoluted European Champions League.

All four Brazilian teams – Palmeiras, Vasco da Gama, Cruzeiro, and Sao Caetano – got through the first round, with only the latter, a Second Division team who had reached last year's Joao Havelange Cup Final in Brazil, struggling.

Other sides gambled too much in switching between weakened and full

Local hero...Boca's Oscar Cordoba pulls off a crucial save in the penalty shoot-out in Buenos Aires

teams in their domestic League and Cup obligations. One Argentinian club, San Lorenzo, concentrated on their national championship, which they later won, while Rosario Central stuck to the Libertadores Cup and were surprise semi-finalists, but finished bottom of the Argentinian League.

Rosario reached the last four with one of the outstanding displays of the tournament, in the quarter-final return leg away to America of Colombia. Juan Pizzi, the Argentina-born former Spanish international, scored twice in the last two minutes after they trailed 3-1 on aggregate. The Argentinians eventually went through on penalties.

There were two nasty incidents during the tournament. The match between Deportes Concepcion and San Lorenzo in Chile finished in a free-for-all among the players, while a linesman was attacked by fans and Bianchi hit on the head by a stone during the Palmeiras-Boca semi-final in Sao Paulo.

Generally, though, blanket TV coverage reduced scope for the kind of intimidation and unsporting behaviour which previously blighted the competition.

FINAL RESULT

1st leg - June 20 - Mexico City
Cruz Azul 0
Boca Juniors 1 (Delgado 85)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 110,000.
Ref: Rezende (Bra)
Cruz Azul: O Perez - Angeles (Campos 41), Almaguer, Brown, Hernandez, Galdames, Gutierrez (Adomaitis 53), Pinheiro, Morales, Cardozo, Palencia.
Boca: Cordoba - Ibarra, Bermudez, Burdisso, Rodriguez (Pinto 55), Villarreal (Pereda 78), Battaglia, Traverso, Riquelme, Gaitan, Gimenez (Delgado 60).

2nd leg - June 28 - Buenos Aires
Boca Juniors 0
Cruz Azul 1 (Palencia 42)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 60,000.
Ref: Hidalgo (Per)
Agg 1-1. Boca 3-1 on pens
Boca: Cordoba - Ibarra, Bermudez, Matellan, Rodriguez, Villarreal (Gimenez 46), Serna, Traverso, Riquelme, Gaitan, Delgado.
Cruz Azul: O Perez - Angeles, Almaguer, Brown, Hernandez, Galdames, Gutierrez, Campos (Mora 66), Pinheiro, Palencia, Cardozo.

The conveyor belt of South American talent never seems to stop, and the Libertadores Cup continues to throw up talented players. Here, and overleaf, Tim Vickery profiles three of this year's stars

Pro-file Jose Cardozo

Paraguay poacher on Cruz control

AT 30, Jose Cardozo can make no claims to being a promising youngster. He is, though, a striker at the height of his powers, who confirmed in the Libertadores Cup that he has made a dramatic improvement.

There were few tears in Paraguay when injury forced Cardozo out of the 1999 Copa America, held on home soil. Two years later, however, he is firmly established as his country's leading forward and was sorely missed when suspension forced him out of the June World Cup qualifier against Chile. Cardozo has frequently caught the eye in the World Cup campaign with his awareness and aggression, the very virtues that made him so important to Cruz Azul's run to the Libertadores Final.

In the group stage the Mexicans lacked a cutting edge. For the knockout stages they drafted in Cardozo from Toluca and the Paraguayan seemed as if he had been playing for Cruz Azul all his life. He established an excellent relationship with Mexican international striker Juan Francisco Palencia, and suddenly the attack was full of movement and options.

Cardozo scored twice to see off Cerro Porteno in the second round and one each against River Plate and Rosario Central in subsequent rounds. He was unable to score against Boca Juniors in the Final but in the second leg in Buenos Aires set up the only goal for Palencia. Shortly afterwards he got on the end of a free-kick but hit a post. Had it gone in, Cruz Azul would have become the first Mexican winners of the Libertadores.

Cardozo can find consolation in the fact that his performances have attracted the attention of Boca, while next year brings the possibility of being part of Paraguay's best-ever World Cup team.

Pro-file Lopes

Palmeiras playmaker enjoying his second chance

IF EVER a man proved himself worthy of a second chance it was Lopes in the Libertadores. In last year's Brazilian championship he was one of a team of Palmeiras unknowns who surpassed all expectations. Unfortunately Lopes also passed the bounds of permitted conduct and tested positive for cocaine. After serving his suspension he forced his way back into a Palmeiras side re-enforced for the Libertadores Cup.

The Libertadores campaign ended with semi-final defeat on penalties to Boca Juniors, but at least for Lopes there was the satisfaction of finishing the tournament as top scorer. Forming an excellent midfield duo with the subtle and slighter Alex, most of Lopes' nine goals came from thundering shots that few in world football can equal. He also showed the variety in his game with a hat-trick against Cruzeiro in the quarter-finals. One was flicked, one curled in and the other blasted.

Such a wealth of resources, plus his physical strength, might make Lopes a natural target for European clubs. But they also have reasons to be cautious. One of Palmeiras coach Celso Roth's frequent complaints is that the 22-year-old is inconsistent. And a wayward personality might make him the kind of Brazilian best stamped 'not for export' – good news for Palmeiras fans, bad news for South American goalkeepers.

Payment issue puts season start under threat

Players are still owed considerable sums by their clubs, writes Eric Weil

ARGENTINA

THE ongoing wrangle over unpaid salaries to players is once again threatening to disrupt domestic League action, with FA president Julio Grondona expressing his doubts that the 2001-02 season would start as scheduled on August 5.

When the players lifted last season's strike over non-payment, in May, it was agreed that 35 per cent of the money owed by the clubs to their players – estimated to be £70million by the latter, but only just over half that amount by the former – would be temporarily paid by the FA with a loan at the end of May, with the balance met by the clubs before the end of July.

The FA complied with its part of the bargain, apart from a few payments outstanding because of missing documentation, but the clubs still owe a sizeable amount of money and say there is little prospect of them finding it.

As a result, the players' union threatened to boycott the opening championship, while Grondona insisted clubs whose players are owed money will not be able to begin their campaign.

Meanwhile, the clubs have begun to introduce stringent economies. Independiente, for example, have ended the practice of paying their players signing fees when they agree new contracts and are offering only salaries; Belgrano Cordoba, who only narrowly avoided relegation for the second year running by beating Second Division Quilmes in a play-off, have put their entire squad up for sale; and Lanus have not renewed the contracts of 26 of their 39 professionals.

At Belgrano's city rivals, Talleres, coach Juan Jose Lopez has resigned because the club have put an embargo on new signings due to lack of funds. They are paying new coach Ricardo Gareca £18,000 a month, only half as much as Lopez was receiving.

Naturally, given the parlous financial state of the game in Argentina, there have been no real transfers of players between domestic clubs, merely loans.

At the same time, players continue to be sold abroad, meaning that the championship is contested by ever younger and less experienced teams.

The controversial move of 19-year-old River Plate striker Javier Saviola to Barcelona has made the biggest splash. River president David Pintado signed a secret agreement with Barcelona to sell Saviola, the club's best player. However, when it was put before River's committee two weeks later all hell broke lose and it was voted out.

Saviola then wrote to the committee pleading them to let him go, partly because his father needed medical attention in Spain, and complaining that he was the only player River Plate have ever refused to let go, and that he was a political pawn. He was finally allowed to leave, with the committee saying the reason was an improved offer from Barcelona of just over £19m.

The other major transfer deal of recent weeks, involving Boca Juniors midfielder Juan Roman Riquelme, hit problems, with a move to Barcelona postponed until December.

Riquelme, a Boca fan, has said he would love to stay in Argentina but appears set on moving abroad because of the relatively low pay on offer in the country and his distaste for certain comments made to the press by the club's officials.

In an effort to offer Riquelme a more attractive financial package, Boca president Mauricio Macri had the novel idea of setting up a phone line for fans who wanted the midfielder to stay. Each call would have cost around £2, with the money going towards paying Riquelme a bonus. However, Riquelme scoffed at the suggestion and the idea was abandoned.

Former Swiss national team coach Enzo Trossero has taken the reins at his former club Independiente, who parted company with Osvaldo Piazza following a poor campaign last term.

In turn, Piazza replaced Carlos Babington at Huracan, while Union Santa Fe were left in the lurch by the departure of Gareca to Talleres.

Staying for now...Boca's Juan Riquelme

Mercosur begins but faces the end

THE lucrative Mercosur Cup, contested by leading clubs from member countries of the Mercosur common market, is now in its fourth season, with this year's competition scheduled to kick off on July 22.

However, the made-for-television tournament was under threat of being cancelled this time round and may well prove to be the last edition.

Brazil's largest TV network, O Globo, has been reluctant to show games because many clubs field only weakened teams in order to concentrate on their domestic campaigns. Another problem is the Brazilian energy crisis, which allows no night games and thus affects both gates and TV ratings.

For the time being, however, the tournament goes ahead. The 20 teams – some of whom are invited, some qualifiers from domestic competition – are drawn in five groups of four, played on a round-robin basis. The winners of each group, plus the three runners-up with the best records, advance to the knockout stages.

The draw:

Group A: Boca Juniors (Arg), Vasco da Gama (Bra), Cerro Porteno (Par), Universidad Catolica (Chl).

Group B: Flamengo (Bra), Nacional (Uru), Olimpia (Par), San Lorenzo (Arg).

Group C: Colo Colo (Chl), Corinthians (Bra), Independiente (Arg), Cruzeiro (Bra).

Group D: Sao Paulo (Bra), Penarol (Uru), Velez Sarsfield (Arg), Talleres Cordoba (Arg).

Group E: River Plate (Arg), Palmeiras (Bra), Universidad de Chile, Gremio (Bra).

Eric Weil

ROUND-UP

BOLIVIA

Bolivar won the opening championship to qualify for next year's Libertadores Cup by beating Oriente Petrolero 1-0 in a play-off.

The two sides finished level on points, forcing the one-off match, after Bolivar defeated their rivals 3-2 at home in the final round of the 22-game campaign. The match was held up for 35 minutes after Oriente goalkeeper Pedro Higa was knocked unconscious by a noise bomb.

CHILE

Defending champions Universidad de Chile led the table by five points from Colo Colo at the halfway stage.

COLOMBIA

Modest side Tulua, coached by little-known Argentinian Hector Quintabani, qualified for next year's Libertadores Cup by winning the opening championship, which they had led from the start.

Luis Garcia, replaced as coach of the national team by Francisco Maturana, has taken over at Millonarios.

ECUADOR

El Nacional won the first stage of the championship, finishing five points clear of Espoli and Olmedo.

PARAGUAY

Cerro Porteno won the opening championship by beating Sportivo Luqueno 3-0 and 3-1 in the two-leg Final.

Uruguayan Luis Cubilla has returned to Olimpia. He will work with Paraguayan Anibal Ruiz, who has been replaced at Guarani by Argentinian Gustavo Costas.

PERU

Alianza Lima, celebrating their 100th anniversary, won the opening championship by beating closest rivals Sporting Cristal 2-1 in the last match.

Peruvian international defender Jose Del Solar, without a club since leaving Mechelen of Belgium, has agreed to play for nothing for his former club, Universitario. In return, Del Solar wants only to be made an honorary member of the club.

URUGUAY

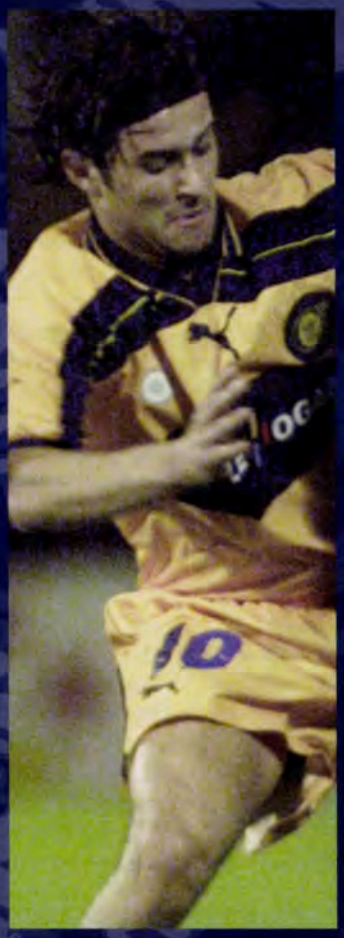
Penarol earned a place in next year's Libertadores Cup by finishing top of the overall table after the classification stage. They also qualified for the opening championship, along with Nacional, Danubio, Juventud, Bella Vista Paysandu, Bella Vista Montevideo, Defensor Sporting, Fenix, Tacuarembo and Montevideo Wanderers.

Eric Weil

Playing for free...Jose Del Solar

Pro-file Ezequiel Gonzalez

Driving force behind Rosario's Libertadores push



"A CREATIVE player with the fighting heart of a defensive midfielder," is how Ezequiel Gonzalez is described by Edguardo Bauza, his coach for the past few years at Argentinian side Rosario Central.

A move to Fiorentina may have been at the back of the midfielder's mind in recent weeks, but this did not affect his commitment to his hometown club. In fact, Gonzalez gave his all as Rosario strove to lift the Libertadores Cup for the first time.

With his strength on the ball, balance and neat touch, the 21-year-old 'Equi' can be very difficult to dispossess – as Cobreloa found to their cost.

It was away to the Chileans in the second round that Gonzalez scored what was a strong candidate for the goal of the tournament, tangoing through the defence like a taller, right-footed Maradona.

The goal, five minutes from time, gave the Argentinians a vital 3-2 lead in the tie which proved enough to put them through to the next round after they drew the return game 1-1.

The team then defied their poor domestic form – they finished bottom of the closing championship table – by reaching the semi-finals of the Libertadores, with Gonzalez a permanent fixture in the Rosario line-up.

But while he proved he can be dangerous in front of goal – his flighted free-kicks are a particular threat – Gonzalez makes many more goals than he scores.

He loves to find space on the left of midfield, giving him the option of either cutting in towards goal or curling a cross off either foot.

The bad news for Rosario's strikers is that Gonzalez is now taking his skills across the Atlantic. The move to Fiorentina will also be a wrench for the midfielder.

"I'm a Central fan," he says, "from a family of Central fans. For me I would stay with the club for my entire career. But I'm going to Italy because it's a big step up in financial terms."

The adaptation to Italian football will not be easy, with space harder to find in Serie A.

But Gonzalez is strong in possession, and if his heart is in it, he can become every bit as central to Fiorentina's play as he was with Rosario.

Tim Vickery

Fact file

Club Fiorentina (Ita)
Country Argentina
Previous club Rosario Central
Born July 10, 1980, in Rosario

Ready for the off

Mark Gleeson runs the rule over the eight remaining Champions League contenders

THERE are some familiar faces back to contest Africa's top club prize, the Champions League, which starts in earnest in mid-August. The straight knockout rounds have been completed, with the eight surviving teams now split into two groups of four, to be played on a round-robin basis.

Esperance, runners-up for the past two years, are favourites to win it this time, although the uncertainty of club soccer at this level in Africa makes that no more than a slightly educated guess.

The Tunisians are again grouped with Mamelodi Sundowns of South Africa, who they pipped on goal difference for a place in last year's Final. The narrowness of that outcome has led to a change of rules. Firstly, group placings will now be determined by head-to-head results should two teams finish level on points. Secondly, a semi-final round has been introduced for the first time, with the group winners playing the other group's runners-up over two legs.

GROUP A

ESPERANCE *(Tunisia)*
Ali Fergani, the veteran Algerian coach, has taken over at a club where key players are showing signs of wear and tear. Goalkeeper Chokri El Ouaer is banned for a year following his attempt to fake injury in last year's Final, midfielder Sirajeddine Chihi has been rested by the national team in recent matches because of fatigue and Hassen Gabsi has lost form. Brazilian striker Reinaldo cannot be expected to stay the course given his disciplinary indiscretions.

Temperamental...Esperance's Reinaldo

JULIUS BERGER *(Nigeria)*
The Abeotuka-based side are this year's candidates seeking Nigeria's first Champions Cup win. Coached by Tunde Disu, formerly with Nigeria's junior sides, they have bought five new players in recent weeks. Ishola Shaibu, who has recently broken into the Nigerian national squad, will be one of their key players.

MAMELODI SUNDOWNS *(South Africa)*
Mercurial at the best of times, Sundowns have just lost their domestic League crown after a hat-trick of wins. They are also on their fourth coach inside a year with the return of veteran Romanian Ted Dumitru, who took the Pretoria club to a first League and Cup double in 1998. Sundowns rely heavily on Nigerian striker Raphael Chukwu, architect of their success since then.

TP MAZEMBE *(DR Congo)*
Once the grand old club of Africa, winning two of their four successive Champions Cup Finals from 1967 to 1970, the Lubumbashi side have been left behind in recent times as the former Zaire has disintegrated and clubs from the capital, Kinshasa, come to dominate domestic football. Economic realities and demands of TV mean their home Champions League matches will be played in Kinshasa, far from their support base.

GROUP B

AL AHLY *(Egypt)*
Africa's top club of the last century have achieved little in the new millennium and had their run of seven successive League titles ended by arch-rivals Zamalek. That led to the end of coach Hans-Jurgen Doerner's tenure and the arrival in June of Portugal's Manuel Jorge. Summer signings include defender Wael Gomma, who recently received his first national team call-up.

ASEC ABIDJAN *(Ivory Coast)*
The 1998 winners are back, coached this time by Swiss Michel Decastel. The sale of five players to Belgian side Beveren in July has not helped, but the club have enough talent coming through their renowned academy to mount a credible challenge. They also have a modicum of experience – Togo striker Kossi Noutsoudje played for Goldfields of Ghana in the 1997 Final, while midfielder Aliou Sibi Badra is the only survivor from ASEC's 1998 winning team.

Winner's medal...Aliou Sibi Badra

CHABAB BELOUIZDAD *(Algeria)*
Having qualified for the Champions League proper, CRB retained the Algerian title to book their place in the 2002 edition. Nour Benzerki is in charge of a side who have already had to come through some difficult early rounds. Kaider Boukessassa and Mohamed Talis won national call-ups because of their club form.

PETRO ATLETICO *(Angola)*
Oil money funds Luanda's most popular club, who could be a danger in the group. "To at least reach the Final is something we can realistically aim for," says Brazilian coach Djalma Cavalcante. The attack includes Kapela Mbiyavanga from neighbouring DR Congo.

● *For match schedule, see World Service, starting page 31.*

Top-heavy draw boosts minnows' hopes

THE draw for the quarter-finals of the African Cup-winners Cup has given the competition a decidedly lopsided look, with the leading protagonists set to face each other.

Holders Zamalek of Egypt must play Tunisia's Club Africain, the continental champions of 10 years ago, in the last eight, with the winners going on to play either Kaizer Chiefs of South Africa or Ismaili, the other Egyptian representatives, in the semi-finals.

By contrast, none of the four clubs in the other half of the draw – Inter Luanda (Angola), Kumbo Strikers (Cameroon), Evico (Gabon) and Niger Tornadoes (Nigeria) – have been this far before in continental competition. Now, one of them is guaranteed a place in the Final.

In the CAF Cup, holders JS Kabylie of Algeria were given a tough quarter-final draw. They face Moroccans Wydad Casablanca, who are now in the charge of Ladislas Lozano, the coach who led amateurs Calais to the 2000 French Cup Final.

Mark Gleeson

ROUND-UP

Chabab take title by default

CHABAB BELOUIZDAD won a second successive title in **ALGERIA,** clinching the crown in their penultimate game.

However, they secured the championship only after nearest rivals JS Kabylie had forfeited their last two matches because of the political turmoil in their home Berber region. USM Alger finished second to qualify for the CAF Cup next year, while USM El Harrach and CS Constantine were relegated.

After much vacillating, Rabah Madjer has now taken over as national team coach, for the second time.

Elsewhere in **NORTH AFRICA**, CS Hammam-Lif won the **TUNISIAN** Cup with a surprise 1-0 win over Etoile Sahel.

Driving Forces...Alain Giresse

In **MOROCCO**, former France midfielder Alain Giresse has taken over as coach of Royal Armed Forces.

CENTRAL AFRICA

Andy Futila is the new coach of **DR CONGO** side DC Motema Pembe, succeeding Malian Mohamed Magassouba, who led the club to their African Cup-winners Cup triumph in 1994. Style du Congo beat Vita Club 4-2 on penalties after a draw in the Final of the Kinshasa League championship.

Cotonsport maintained their healthy lead at the top of the standings in **CAMEROON**, holding an eight-point advantage over Tonnerre Yaounde.

Santana were top by a point from Caixao Grande on **SAO TOME E PRINCIPE.**

EAST AFRICA

The national stadium in the **TANZANIAN** capital of Dar-es-Salaam will not be allowed to stage any games for a year following the stabbing of Ahmed El Nahass, from Egyptian club Ismaili, during a Cup-winners Cup tie against host club Simba in May.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

ZIMBABWE beat Swaziland 2-1 to join Angola and Zambia in the semi-finals of the Cosafa Castle Cup.

Dutch coach Clemens Westerhof has signed a short-term deal with Zimbabwean club Dynamos.

The 61-year-old has been coaching in Africa for more than a decade, taking Nigeria to their first World Cup finals appearance in 1994, but has been out of work since being fired by South African club Mamelodi Sundowns in November last year.

Bloemfontein Celtic have lost a legal challenge to their relegation from **SOUTH AFRICA'S** Premier League.

Meanwhile, Clive Barker, who took South Africa to the 1996 African Nations Cup title, is the new coach at Manning Rangers.

Costa do Sol won the League in **MOZAMBIQUE**, finishing on 45 points, seven more than second-placed Ferroviario Maputo.

WEST AFRICA

Belgian Rene Taelman, who was in charge of Burkina Faso at the 2000 African Nations Cup finals, is back in Africa, this time as the new national coach of **BENIN.**

Jeanne d'Arc regained the **SENEGALESE** League title they won in 1999 by beating defending champions Diaraf Dakar 2-1 in their final match. This put them two points clear of ASC Ndiambour. Sonacos Diourbel won the Cup, beating Goree 1-0 in the Final.

Enyimba FC won their first **NIGERIAN** Super League title, finishing unbeaten in the four-club play-off for the championship.

Nigeria's Katsina United are among seven clubs banned by CAF for two years for failing to fulfil commitments in African club competitions this year. The others are Atletico (Burundi), Matchedje (Mozambique), Military Police (Uganda), Okwahu United (Ghana), Simba (Rwanda) and Sporting Praia Cruz (Sao Tome e Principe).

Nigerian international Kenneth Zeigbo has been banned by FIFA after absconding from Libyan side Al Ahli, where he had been on loan from Venezia.

Police had to rescue the coaching staff of **IVORY COAST** side Africa Sports after the club's fans threatened violence following the 4-1 home defeat by Second Division ASC Bouake in the Cup semi-finals.

ASEC Abidjan have sold five players to Beveren in Belgium, including internationals Zezeto Venance and Gilles Yapi Yapo. However, the club were still holding sway at home, leading Africa Sports by eight points in the League.

Etoile Filante won the **BURKINA FASO** title by two points after beating defending champions USFA 3-0 on the last day. It was Etoile's first title since 1994.

Mark Gleeson

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Transfers dominate as Jubilo cruise it

Mike Plastow and Yumiko Nagae on the end of the J.League's First Stage

Arsenal bound...Junichi Inamoto

JAPAN

JUBILO IWATA confirmed they are back as Japan's leading team by sweeping to the First Stage title with two games to spare.

The 1999-2000 Asian club champions have been resurrected under manager Masakazu Suzuki, who has been with the club as a defender and assistant coach throughout his career but only took over in September.

"I wanted all the players to contribute more individually, so I switched the whole system around, from the previous wing-back style to the high defensive line," explains Suzuki. "The whole team now work in both defence and attack, with Hiroshi Nanami at the fulcrum."

Jubilo's fluid, hard-running, quick-passing game proved too much for their J.League opponents, and they kicked off the First Stage with eight straight wins. This established a commanding lead which no other side looked likely to haul back.

With the First Stage title a foregone conclusion, transfers have been hogging the headlines. Not before time, talented midfielders Shinji Ono and Junichi Inamoto have followed in Hidetoshi Nakata's footsteps by joining top European clubs.

Ono, of Urawa Reds, has joined Feyenoord on a five-year deal after training with the Dutch club during Japan's winter break.

Gamba Osaka's Inamoto impressed Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger during the Confederations Cup and, more recently, scored the only goal of the Kirin Cup victory over Yugoslavia. At press time he was on the verge of going to Highbury, and his passing skills and physical aggression should make him well suited to the Premier League.

Meanwhile, Yokohama F Marinos have appointed Brazil's Italia 90 coach Sebastiao Lazaroni to replace Ossie Ardiles. Lazaroni has also had spells at Fiorentina and Bari.

Hong Kong battles hard times

HONG KONG, home of Asia's oldest professional league, has been forced to restructure its entire footballing set-up after a series of body-blows left the future of the game there in grave doubt.

Yee Hope, winners of the Senior Challenge Shield, and League runners-up Instant-Dict announced they would withdraw from next season's League, leaving just six teams. They include Ming Fung from Guangdong, the first club from China to play in the Hong Kong League. They were invited to take part by the HKFA in an attempt to boost interest in the local game.

Disillusionment with the standard of local football and the extensive television coverage of Europe leagues have harmed the domestic game, causing attendances to fall dramatically. The overall figure dropped by 43 per cent last year, with one League match attracting just 27 fans.

The crisis has hit even the strongest clubs, with South China, the territory's top side, forced to cut wages of coaching and playing staff. At the same time, foreign players have been leaving Hong Kong in droves as clubs are unable to pay them.

Michael Church

ROUND-UP

Reprieved...Zuhair Bakhit

Bakhit ban is lifted

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES striker Zuhair Bakhit has had his lifetime national team ban lifted by the FA. The Al Wasl forward was suspended after failing to co-operate with interim UAE coach Milan Macala in the run-up to the 1997 FIFA Confederations Cup in Riyadh. The sanction was cancelled, however, when Bakhit sent a letter of apology to the federation.

German coach Rainer Holleman, who took Al Kuwait to the Kuwaiti League title last season, has signed a one-year deal with UAE's Al Shaab.

Singapore and Selangor, once fierce rivals in **MALAYSIA'S** M-League, will resume their rivalry in the newly created Regent's Cup, to be held at the Shah Alam stadium in Kuala Lumpur in August.

Defending **CHINESE** champions Dalian went six points clear at the top after a 6-1 victory over Shaanxi. Shanghai Shenhua continued to lose ground after losing three times in four matches.

Abahani KC maintained their 100 per cent record after six rounds of the **BANGLADESH** Premier League, beating second-placed Rahmatganj MFS 2-0.

Michael Church & Azam Mahmood

Angry...Peter Velappan

Lebanese suspended by FIFA

THE Lebanese FA has been suspended by FIFA because of government interference in the association following a match-fixing scandal.

LFA general secretary Rahif Alameh and his staff were removed by the Minister of Sport because the government was dissatisfied with the handling of match-rigging allegations which resulted in Tadamon Sur being stripped of the title.

"Both FIFA and the AFC object to government interference in matters concerning our members," said Asian Football Confederation general secretary Peter Velappan. "FIFA was forced to intervene and suspend the LFA as a result of the dissolution and to avoid further complications to the issue."

Initially, Al Nijmeh were awarded the League title when the results of games played by seven teams were annulled. But after the government's action, Al Ansar were named champions and the seven alleged to be involved in match-fixing were relegated.

This led to angry protests by fans on the streets of Beirut, prompting the AFC to appeal for calm.

Michael Church

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Australia	3132	BRAVE	3133
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	0032		0052

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	0055	Craig David	0056
	0057	blur	3035
	0059		0060
	0061		0062
	0063		0064
	0065		0066
EMINEM	7402		3039

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	3205		0213
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CANCER	3191		3192
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	3197		3198
	3199		3200

LOOK

The UK Top Twenty

2593 Shaggy Ft Rayvon • Angel
2717 Mis-Teeq • All I Want
2585 DJ Pied Piper • Do you really like it
2718 2 Pac • Untill The End Of Time
2711 Stereophonics • Have a nice day
2713 Linp Bizkit • My Way
2703 Brandy & Ray J • Another Day In Paradise
2701 Faithless • We Come 1
2608 S Club 7 • Don't stop movin'
2587 Blue • All Rise
2704 Basement Jaxx • Romeo
2719 Sticky ft Ms Dynamite • Booo
2702 Steps • Here And Now
2712 Daft Punk • Digital Love
2595 Eddy Grant • Electric Avenue
2586 Dido • Thank You
2596 Travis • Sing
2705 Marti Pellow • Close To You
2720 Public Domain • Rock Da Funky Beats
2721 Allstars • Best Friends

Rock & Pop

2706 Muse • New Born
2707 Mel B • Lullaby
2708 Manics • Ocean Spray
2709 Boris/Roisin • Never Enough
2607 Geri Halliwell • It's Raining Men
2537 Nelly Ft • Ride with me
2589 3LW • No More
2710 I Monster • Daydream In Blue
2594 Mya • Free
2606 M.O.B. • Cold as ICE
2604 Gabrielle • Out of Reach
2590 Sunshine Anderson • Heard It All Before
2538 Fragma • You are Alive
2597 OutKast • So Fresh So Clean
2531 J-LO • Play

Rock & Pop

2598 Lisa Roxanne • No Flow
2599 Ladacris • What's Your Fantasy
2588 Radio Head • Pyramid Song
2591 Aaron Soul • Ring Ring Ring
2592 Musique Vs U2 • New Years Dub
2580 Oxide & Nuetrino • Up middle Fin
2582 ATeens • Upside Down
2539 Eve • Who's that Girl
2526 Missy Eliott • Get ur freak on
2523 Destiny's Child • Survivor
2581 BBMak • Still on your side
2504 Gorillaz • Clint Eastwood
2501 Shaggy feat Rikrok • It wasn't me
2524 Rownan Keating • Lovin' each day
2583 Stereo MCs • Deep Down and Dirty
2503 Crazy Town • Butterfly
2508 Wheatus • Teenage Dirtbag
2584 Pepe Deluxe • Before you Leave
2540 Bon Jovi • One Wild Night
2534 R.E.M • Imitation Of Life
2525 Liquid Dreams • O Town
2506 Atomic Kitten • Whole Again
2500 Emma Bunton • What took you
2533 Steven Gately • Stay
2625 Janet Jackson • All for you
2701 Jason Downs • The White Boy
1004 Sandstorm
1005 Freestyler
1030 Take On Me
1049 Baby One More Time
1053 Killing Me Softly
1055 Hey Jude
1057 Music
1061 Do You Think I'm Sexy
1062 In the Summer
1063 Son of a Preacher Man
1065 Satisfaction
1067 Careless Whisper

TV & Film

1006 Bond
1007 Knight Rider
1025 Ghostbusters
1026 Flintstones
1029 Police Academy
1035 Southpark
1037 X files
1043 Friends
1051 Eye of the Tiger
1114 Groovejet
2330 The Entertainer
2336 Yakerty Sax - Benny Hill Theme
2371 Lullaby
2373 Aadams Family
2375 Austin Powers
2377 Back to the Future
2379 Black Adder Theme
2380 Black Beauty Theme
2383 Starwars - Cantina
2386 Theme from The crypt
2387 Theme from Dallas
2388 Theme From Davey Crocket
2389 Theme From Doctor No
2390 Theme From Doctor Who
2391 Eastenders
2392 The Exorcist
2393 Father Ted
2394 Fawlty Towers
2395 The Flintstones
2396 Fragal Rock Theme
2397 Theme From Friends
2398 Grange Hill Theme
2399 The Great Escape
2400 Halloween
2401 Happy Days Theme
2402 Have I Got News for You
2404 Hogan's Heroes
2407 The Itchy and Scratchy Show

TV & Film

2408 Looney Toons
2409 You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin'
2410 Match of the Day
2411 Mission Impossible 2 - Limp Biskit
2412 Mission Impossible
2413 Pink Panther
2415 Postman Pat
2416 Theme from Rainbow
2417 Theme from Red Dwarf
2418 Magic Roundabout
2419 Scooby Doo
2421 The X-Files
2422 Tubular Bells - Mike Oldfield
2456 Bob the Builder
2457 Monty Python 2
2458 Monty Python 3
2459 Monty Python
2460 The Muppets
2461 Only Fools and Horses
2462 Rhubarb and Custard
2463 Star Trek
2464 Superman
2465 Star Wars End
2466 Star Wars
2467 Star Wars - Imperial March
2468 Thunder Birds
2469 Titanic Theme

Football Ringtones

2633 Blowing Bubbles - West Ham
2634 Match of the Day
2635 Chelsea
2636 Glory Glory
2637 Spurs
2638 Southampton
2639 You'll never walk alone

Others

2313 UK National Anthem
2316 Bolero
2320 Eine Kleine Nacht Musik - Mozart
2322 Vanessa Mae
2325 Birdy Song
2326 Coca Cola Theme
2327 Death March
2328 Dualling Banjos
2329 My Old Man's a Dustman
2333 On Ilkley Moor Bar Tat
2335 Yes! We Have no Bananas
2338 Memories - Cats
2339 If I Were a Rich Man - Fiddler...
2341 Hard Knock Life - Annie
2342 Jesus Christ Superstar
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Brian Glanville's LAST WORD

'I have never detected the exertion of any Government pressure to facilitate the signing of players from outside the EU'

Time for Hoey to put up or shut up

THE political demise of ex-sports minister Kate Hoey has been deplored by columnists as different as the robust Ian Wooldridge and the fastidious A N Wilson, critic and novelist, known more in the past for his lampoons of Tony Blair and defence of poet Ezra Pound than for any interest in sport.

Controversial claims...Kate Hoey

Readers of this column won't be surprised that I am not moved to join them, though I hardly think the new incumbent, Richard Caborn, will be much of a replacement. It has already been pointed out that the true idiocy of his failure to answer five questions on sport during a radio interview was to agree to answer them at all. Still, he must surely be an improvement on ghastly, garrulous Tony Banks, one subject at least on which Wooldridge and myself are in total agreement.

Chelsea chairman Ken Bates has not joined the chorus of regret over Hoey's departure, though how far she was responsible for the collapse of plans to redevelop Wembley, during Bates' tenure as chairman of the company in charge of the project, is not easy to determine. Nor did I blame her, as you know, for her suggestion that a limited experiment be conducted with temporary terracing, as in Germany.

What I do find strange and hard to explain is her insistence, in her general lament of self-pity over her dismissal, that Government pressure has been exerted to facilitate the signing of players from outside the EU.

As one who has been often and most closely involved with the process, I can say emphatically that I have never detected any such pressure, either on the highly competent and disinterested officials involved or on the people of the panel.

Some may argue that the existing criteria are open to discussion, but that is wholly another matter. Hoey should put up or shut up. Chapter and verse, please, if there be any.

Football's put cricketers on a sticky wicket

ENDLESS explanations are given for the demise of English cricket, but I find it significant that on the same day the sports pages carried details of the national team's 11th successive defeat in a one-day match, they were also speculating about the probability that Sol Campbell, then of Tottenham, could soon be earning £200,000 a week.

In brief, the real trouble with cricket has been football and its insatiable demands, opportunities and rewards for its better players. Not that I use the word 'better' rather than 'best'. At a time when the average salary of a Premiership footballer is calculated at £450,000, it is plain that not only the stars are pocketing large sums.

Time was when cricket had the ascendancy over football. I well remember a chat I had with Ken Taylor, Yorkshire batsman and Huddersfield Town centre-half, outside The Oval, before he went in to play against Surrey. There was no contest, he insisted. Cricket, with its far longer career, came first.

Go back further still, to the 1940s and early 1950s, and you find that supreme all-rounder, Denis Compton, taking off his football boots, putting on his cricket pads and leaving Arsenal for months at a time to play Test matches abroad. There was nothing the Gunners could do to retain their dazzling outside-left.

Star cricketers can still make a lot of money, but they are a rare breed. With county cricket moribund, salaries so poor, the typical Arsenal footballer-cricketer in post-war years has been Arthur Milton, whose career I followed from his debut as a timorous 17-year-old inside-right in a friendly at Fulham.

By the autumn of 1951 he was a dashing and dynamic outside-right, unexpectedly picked for England against Austria at Wembley. In the early stages he made two fine chances for his inside-right, Ivan Broadis, both missed. But Milton faded out, never got another cap, still sparkled with Arsenal but settled down to bat for Gloucestershire and England.

He was a double international, which, oddly enough, Denis Compton never was, since his dozen caps, 11 of them in the war, were 'unofficial'.

Supreme all-rounder...Denis Compton

And on retiring what would Milton, who nowadays would surely be a £1million-a-year footballer, become? Why, a postman!

Copa America overshadowed by World Cup campaign

HOW LONG is the fiasco of a two-yearly Copa America going to endure? Even before the off-on farce in the run-up to the current event in Colombia, Argentina had decided to appear without half-a-dozen of their stars. They then withdrew altogether.

The tournament has been hopelessly overshadowed by the misbegotten 18-month drag of the South American World Cup qualifying group, with its endless demands on personnel. Oh, for the days when there were just three small South American qualifying groups, and a little room to breathe and move!

Shanks for the memory

COLIN SHINDLER'S interesting book on the Summerbee family told a tale of special interest to me, since it conflicts with my own memories of a distant event. Not that Shindler is in any way to blame, since he was clearly told the story by Arsenal and Everton star Joe Mercer, who in turn had plainly heard it from the protagonist, Bill Shankly.

'Shanks', it seems, was incensed by the fact that, having supposedly played as a guest for Arsenal all the 1942-43 season, he should be dropped from their team to play Charlton in the League South Cup Final, staged at Wembley, in favour of a Gunners player recalled at the last moment.

At that time I was an 11-year-old Arsenal fan, who saw both the semi-final, versus QPR at Stamford Bridge, and the Final, when Charlton lost 7-1. As I recalled, Shanks was pressed into service as a 'guest' inside-right at the Bridge, where he missed an open goal.

All speculation before the Final was whether Bryn Jones, then, at £14,500, Britain's most expensive player, would be brought in from army service for the game, in place of the incumbent inside-left, Cliff Bastin. In the event, it was Bastin who kept his place.

Taking the reins...Glenn Roeder is unveiled as West Ham boss

Roeder steps up, Lippi steps back

MANAGERIAL madness at Juventus and, much further down the pecking order, West Ham.

That the Hammers wanted to be rid of Harry Redknapp was surprising, but just about understandable had they had a suitable incumbent lined up. But they hadn't. They hoped to get Alan Curbishley, their old inside-forward, but he decided to stay with Charlton. Then they made it known, to Hibernian's justifiable fury, that they'd be partial to their manager, Alex McLeish. Again, no dice.

So the lot fell upon Glenn Roeder, whom the club, with monumental ineptitude, had publicly ruled out of contention. Poor Glenn; a fine fellow and an excellent coach, who thus found himself on a hiding to nothing, his appointment assailed by the fans and the combustible Paolo Di Canio alike.

In Graeco-Roman times there was a famous saying: "Those whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad." Couldn't the Hammers anticipate the chain reaction of assistant coach Frank Lampard and then his son walking out following Redknapp's departure?

Juventus, meanwhile, re-appointed Marcello Lippi, who had walked out on them midway through the 1998-99 season, demoralised and disenchanted, though it was already known he would take over at Inter.

Not for very long. The next Serie A season was only 48 hours old and Inter had just lost their opener, to Reggina, when Lippi was shown the door.

Carlo Ancelotti, his successor at Juventus, was later in the season given a lucrative extension to his contract, but by the time it came to the last game of the campaign just gone, when Juve had at least a mathematical chance, from second place, of winning the *scudetto*, Ancelotti knew that, come what may, he was to be replaced by Lippi.

Nakata's Naples trip proves fruitless

ON Sunday, June 10, Hidetoshi Nakata sat on the bench in Naples while Roma played their penultimate Serie A game against Napoli; and never left it. Earlier that day, in Yokohama, Japan had to play France in the Final of the Confederations Cup without Nakata, much their best player, and succumbed 1-0 in a one-sided game.

So how did the midfielder manage to duck that Final and fly to Italy, not least when it appears that, after the long haul from Japan, Roma had no intention of using him in Naples?

The Confederations Cup is a half-baked, irrelevant, superfluous affair, typical of the mistaken innovations of Joao Havelange, but one assumes that, for better or for worse, it is an 'official' tournament, which thus gives priority to international teams over clubs. The Japan coach, Philippe Troussier, certainly seemed to think so, and demanded that Nakata play for Japan.

My spies in Italy tell me, though, that Nakata never expected to be on the field for Roma; he merely wanted to take part in the post-match celebrations when they had won the game and thus the *scudetto*. Which all had to wait another week!

Bench-warmer...Hidetoshi Nakata

August 1971

IN AN issue stuffed with news of the great and the good, the opening spread was devoted to Bulgarian international Georgi Asparoukhov, who had been killed in a car crash near Sofia a few weeks before.

World Soccer's obituary described the "Big Fellow" as "brave, good in the air, skilful in control" and "on his day, the finest Bulgarian footballer yet".

Another recent death, that of Juventus manager Armando Picchi, elicited an equally affectionate tribute from Brian Glanville. He recalled how Picchi, "unforgiveably" discarded as a player for the 1966 World Cup, travelled to England anyway, as a tourist. One Sunday, he agreed to play in a kickabout in London's Battersea Park and scored the only goal of the game, during which he performed "with a seriousness and a determination, a professionalism astonishing under the circumstances". These included the fact that, without any football shorts, Picchi played the entire match in his underpants.

Then there were the retirements. In Hungary, Honved's Lajos Tichy signed off an illustrious career by scoring a brilliantly-taken goal against Vasas in his final game.

Ferencvaros' 40-year-old keeper Geza Gulyas achieved the same feat, slamming home a penalty late on in his last appearance, against Dunaujvaros, before leaving the field through a guard of honour formed by both teams "with tears streaming down his face".

There were no dramatic farewells or tears for Francisco Gento, however, as he ended his playing days after 18 years at the Bernabeu, 11 as captain. Instead of any formal announcement of his retirement, Gento's name merely appeared on Real Madrid's official list of seven players who were not being retained for the next season.

This was all the more remarkable since, as Norman Cutler put it, Gento had become the most popular player in the history of the club.

The Spaniard's erstwhile team-mate, Ferenc Puskas, had just coached Panathinaikos to the European Cup Final, losing 2-0 to Ajax at Wembley, and Leslie Vernon spent time with him in the days leading up to the game. For the writer, the Hungarian had, as a player, "an irresistible swagger and impudence", and it was clear he felt his character was little changed.

Vernon arranged a practice match for Panathinaikos against a '*World Soccer* XI', including then editor Philip Rising, which Puskas refereed "showing a remarkable knowledge of Greek swear-words and an equally remarkable disregard for the rules". Panathinaikos won 15-0.

Unsurprisingly, Ajax proved more formidable opponents a few days later, as the Dutch champions embarked on their hat-trick of European Cup wins.

Coincidentally, Internazionale, their opponents in the following year's Final, featured on the cover of the August 1971 edition, stepping out to face Crystal Palace at Selhurst Park in a much more modest competition, the Anglo-Italian Cup.

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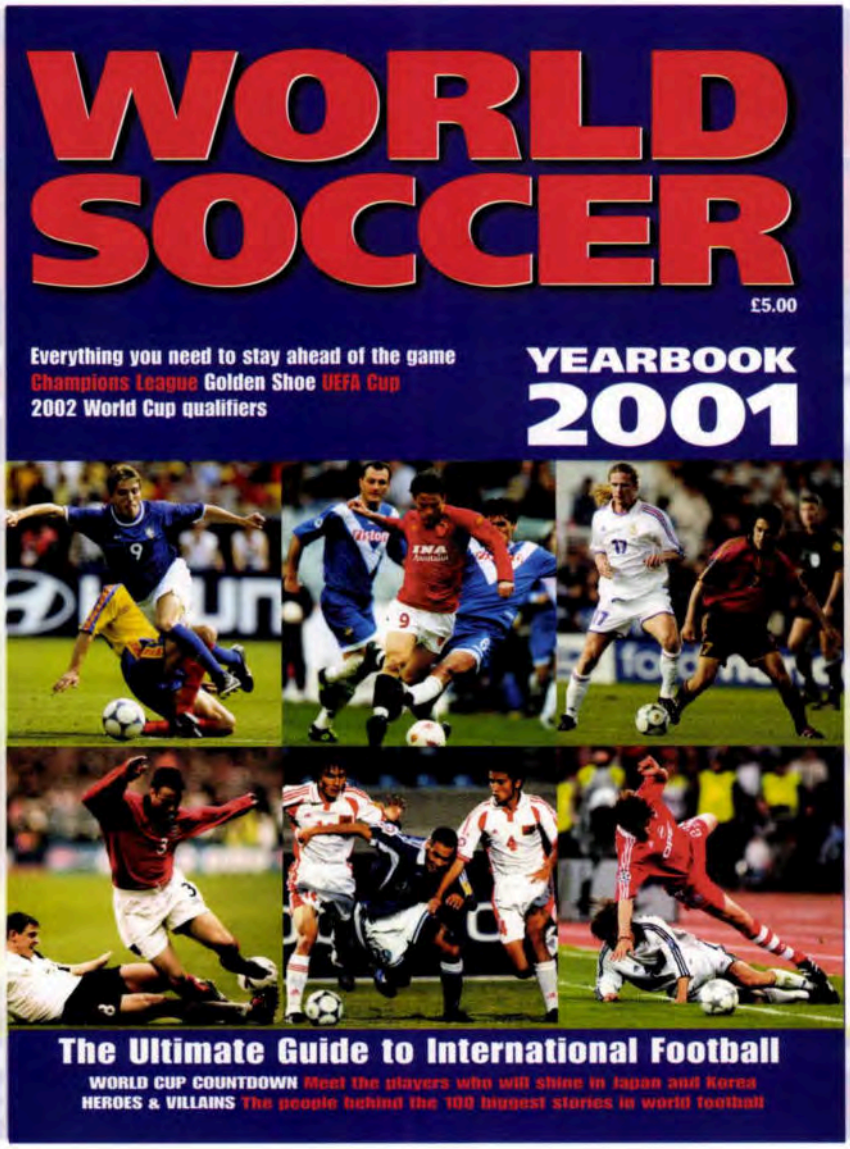

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